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AINSWORTH'S MAGAZINE.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

INTRODUCTION.—THE LAST ABBOT OF WHALLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEACON ON PENDLE HILL.

THERE were eight watchers by the beacon on Pendle Hill in Lancashire. Two were stationed on either side of the north-eastern extremity of the mountain. One looked over the castled heights of Clithero; the woody eminences of Bowland; the bleak ridges of Thornley; the broad moors of Bleasdale; the Trough of Bolland and Wolf Crag; and even brought within his ken the black fells overhanging Lancaster. The other tracked the stream called Pendle Water, almost from its source amid the neighbouring hills, and followed its windings through the leafless forest until it united its waters to those of the Calder, and swept on in swifter and clearer current to wash the base of Whalley Abbey. But the watcher's survey did not stop here. Noting the sharp spire of Burnley Church, relieved against the rounded masses of timber constituting Townley Park; as well as the entrance of the gloomy mountain gorge, known as the Grange of Cliviger; his far-reaching gaze passed over Todmorden, and settled upon the distant summits of Blackstone Edge.

Dreary was the prospect on all sides. Black moor, bleak fell, straggling forest, intersected with sullen streams as black as ink, with here and there a small tarn, or moss-pool, with waters of the same hue—these constituted the chief features of the scene. The whole district was barren, and thinly populated. Of towns only Clithero, Colne, and Burnley—the latter little more than a village—were in view. In the valleys there were a few hamlets and scattered cottages, and on the uplands an occasional "booth," as the hut of the herdsman was termed; but of more important mansions, there were only six, as Merlay, Twistleton, Alcancoats, Sax-

feld, Ightenhill, and Gawthorpe. The "vaccaries" for the cattle, of which the herdsmen had the care, and the "lawnds," or parks within the forest, appertaining to some of the halls before mentioned, offered the only evidences of cultivation. All else was heathy waste, morass, and wood.

Still, in the eye of the sportsman—and the Lancashire gentlemen of the sixteenth century were keen lovers of sport—the country had a strong interest. Pendle Forest abounded with game. Grouse, plover, and bittern were found upon its moors; woodcock and snipe on its marshes; wild-duck, teal, and widgeon upon its pools. In its chases ranged herds of deer, protected by the terrible forest-laws, then in full force; and the hardier huntsman might follow the wolf to his lair in the mountains; might spear the boar in the oaken glades, or the otter on the river's brink; might unearth the badger or the fox, or smite the fierce cat-a-mountain with a quarrel from his bow. A nobler victim sometimes, also, awaited him in the shape of a wild mountain bull, a denizen of the forest, and a remnant of the herds that had once browsed upon the hills, but which had almost all been captured, and removed to stock the park of the Abbot of Whalley. The streams and pools were full of fish; the stately heron frequented the meres; and on the craggy heights built the kite, the falcon, and the kingly eagle.

There were eight watchers by the beacon. Two stood apart from the others, looking to the right and the left of the hill. Both were armed with swords and arquebuses, and wore steel caps and coats of buff. Their sleeves were embroidered with the five wounds of Christ, encircling the name of Jesus—the badge of the Pilgrimage of Grace. Between them, on the verge of the mountain, was planted a great banner, displaying a silver cross, the chalice, and the Host, together with an ecclesiastical figure, but wearing a helmet instead of a mitre, and holding a sword in place of a crosier, with the unoccupied hand pointing to the two towers of a monastic structure, as if to intimate that he was armed for its defence. This figure, as the device beneath it showed, represented John Paslew, Abbot of Whalley, or, as he styled himself in his military capacity, Earl of Poverty.

There were eight watchers by the beacon. Two have been described. Of the other six, two were stout herdsmen carrying crooks, and holding a couple of mules, and a richly-caparisoned war-horse by the bridle. Near them stood a broad-shouldered, athletic young man, with the fresh complexion, curling brown hair, light eyes, and open Saxon countenance best seen in his native county of Lancaster. He wore a Lincoln-green tunic, with a bugle suspended from the shoulder by a silken cord, and a silver plate engraved with the three luces, the ensign of the Abbot of Whalley, hung by a chain from his neck. A hunting-knife was in his girdle, and an eagle's plume in his cap, and he leaned upon the butt-end of a cross-bow, regarding three persons who stood together by a peat fire, on the sheltered side of the beacon. Two of these were elderly men, in the white gowns and scapularies of Cistercian monks, doubtless from Whalley, as the abbey belonged to that order. The third and last, and evidently their superior, was a tall man in a riding dress, wrapped in a long mantle of black velvet, trimmed with minever, and displaying the same badges as those upon the sleeves of the sentinels, only wrought in richer material. His features were strongly marked and stern, and bore traces of age; but his eye was bright, and his carriage erect and dignified.

The beacon, near which the watchers stood, consisted of a vast pile of logs of timber, heaped upon a circular range of stones, with openings to admit air, and having the centre filled with fagots, and other quickly combustible materials. Torches were placed near at hand, so that the pile could be lighted on the instant.

The watch was held one afternoon at the latter end of November, 1536. In that year had arisen a formidable rebellion in the northern counties of England, the members of which, while engaging to respect the person of the king, Henry VIII., and his issue, bound themselves by solemn oath to accomplish the restoration of Papal supremacy throughout the realm, and the restitution of religious establishments and lands to their late ejected possessors. They bound themselves, also, to punish the enemies of the Romish Church, and suppress heresy. From its religious character, the insurrection assumed the name of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and numbered among its adherents all who had not embraced the new doctrines in Yorkshire and Lancashire. That such an outbreak should occur on the suppression of the monasteries was not marvellous. The desecration and spoliation of so many sacred structures—the destruction of shrines and images long regarded with veneration—the ejection of so many ecclesiastics, renowned for hospitality and revered for piety and learning—the violence and rapacity of the commissioners appointed by the Vicar-General Cromwell to carry out these severe measures—all these outrages were regarded by the people with abhorrence, and disposed them to aid the sufferers in resistance. As yet the wealthier monasteries in the north had been spared, and it was to preserve them from the greedy hands of the visitors, Doctors Lee and Layton, that the insurrection had been undertaken. A simultaneous rising took place in Lincolnshire, headed by Makarel, Abbot of Barlings, but it was speedily quelled by the vigour and skill of the Duke of Suffolk, and its leader executed. But the northern outbreak was better organised, and of greater force, for it now numbered thirty thousand men, under the command of a skilful and resolute leader named Robert Aske.

As may be supposed, the priesthood were main movers in a revolt having their especial benefit for its aim; and many of them, following the example of the Abbot of Barlings, clothed themselves in steel instead of woollen garments, and girded on the sword and the breast-plate for the redress of their grievances and the maintenance of their rights. Amongst these were the Abbots of Jervaux, Furness, Fountains, Rivaulx, and Salley, and, lastly, the Abbot of Whalley, before mentioned; a fiery and energetic prelate, who had ever been constant and determined in his opposition to the aggressive measures of the king. Such was the Pilgrimage of Grace, such its design, and such its supporters.

Several large towns had already fallen into the hands of the insurgents. York, Hull, and Pontefract had yielded; Skipton Castle was besieged, and defended by the Earl of Cumberland; and battle was offered to the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Shrewsbury, who headed the king's forces at Doncaster. But the object of the Royalist leaders was to temporise, and an armistice was offered to the rebels and accepted. Terms were next proposed and debated.

During the continuance of this armistice all hostilities ceased; but beacons were reared upon the mountains, and their fires were to be taken as a new summons to arms. This signal the eight watchers expected.

Though late in November, the day had been unusually fine, and, in consequence, the whole hilly ranges around were clearly discernible, but now the shades of evening were fast drawing on.

"Night is approaching," cried the tall man in the velvet mantle, impatiently; "and still the signal comes not. Wherefore this delay? Can Norfolk have accepted our conditions? Impossible. The last messenger from our camp at Scawsby Lees brought word that the duke's sole terms would be the king's pardon to the whole insurgent army, provided they at once dispersed—except ten persons, six named and four unnamed."

"And were you amongst those named, lord abbot?" demanded one of the monks.

"John Paslew, Abbot of Whalley, it was said, headed the list," replied the other, with a bitter smile. "Next came William Trafford, Abbot of Salley. Next Adam Sudbury, Abbot of Jervaux. Then our leader, Robert Aske. Then John Eastgate, Monk of Whalley——"

"How, lord abbot!" exclaimed the monk. "Was my name mentioned?"

"It was," rejoined the abbot. "And that of William Haydocke, also Monk of Whalley, closed the list."

"The unrelenting tyrant," muttered the other monk. "But these terms could not be accepted?"

"Assuredly not," replied Paslew; "they were rejected with scorn. But the negotiations were continued by Sir Ralph Ellerker and Sir Robert Bowas, who were to claim on our part a free pardon for all; the establishment of a parliament and courts of justice at York; the restoration of the Princess Mary to the succession; the Pope to his jurisdiction; and our brethren to their houses. But such conditions will never be granted. With my consent no armistice should have been agreed to. We are sure to lose by the delay. But I was overruled by the Archbishop of York and the Lord Darcy. Their voices prevailed against the Abbot of Whalley—or, if it please you, the Earl of Poverty."

"It is the assumption of that derisive title which has drawn upon you the full force of the king's resentment, lord abbot," observed Father Eastgate.

"It may be," replied the abbot. "I took it in mockery of Cromwell and the ecclesiastical commissioners, and I rejoice that they have felt the sting. The Abbot of Barlings called himself Captain Cobbler because, as he affirmed, the state wanted mending like old shoon. And is not my title equally well chosen? Is not the church smitten with poverty? Have not ten thousand of our brethren been driven from their homes to beg or to starve? Have not the houseless poor whom we fed at our gates, and lodged within our wards, gone away hungry and without rest? Have not the sick whom we would have relieved died untended by the hedge-side? I am the head of the poor in Lancashire, the redresser of their grievances, and therefore I style myself Earl of Poverty. Have I not done well?"

"You have, lord abbot," replied Father Eastgate.

"Poverty will not alone be the fate of the church, but of the whole realm, if the rapacious designs of the monarch and his heretical counsellors are carried forth," pursued the abbot. "Cromwell, Audeley, and Rich, have wisely ordained that no infant shall be baptised without tribute to the king; that no man who owns not above twenty pounds a year shall consume wheaten bread, or eat the flesh of fowl or swine without tribute; and that all ploughed land shall pay tribute likewise. Thus the church

is to be beggared, the poor plundered, and all men burthened, to fatten the king, and fill his exchequer."

"This must be a jest," observed Father Haydocke.

"It is a jest no man laughs at," rejoined the abbot, sternly; "any more than the king's counsellors will laugh at the Earl of Poverty, whose title they themselves have created. But wherefore comes not the signal? Can aught have gone wrong? I will not think it. The whole country, from the Tweed to the Humber, and from the Lune to the Mersey, is ours; and if we but hold together, our cause must prevail."

"Yet we have many and powerful enemies," observed Father Eastgate; "and the king, it is said, hath sworn never to make terms with us. Tidings were brought to the abbey this morning that the Earl of Derby is assembling forces at Preston, to march upon us."

"We will give him a warm reception if he comes," replied Paslew, fiercely. "He will find that our walls have not been kernelled and embattled by license of good King Edward the Third for nothing; and that our brethren can fight as well as their predecessors fought in the time of Abbot Holden, when they took tithe by force from Sir Christopher Parsons of Slaydburn. The abbey is strong, and right well defended, and we need not fear a surprise. But it grows dark fast, and yet no signal comes."

"Perchance the waters of the Don have again arisen, so as to prevent the army from fording the stream," observed Father Haydocke; "or it may be that some disaster hath befallen our leader."

"Nay, I will not believe the latter," said the abbot; "Robert Aske is chosen by Heaven to be our deliverer. It has been prophesied that a 'worm with one eye' shall work the redemption of the fallen faith, and you know that Robert Aske hath been deprived of his left orb by an arrow."

"Therefore it is," observed Father Eastgate, "that the Pilgrims of Grace chant the following ditty:—

Forth shall come an Aske with one eye,
He shall be chief of the company—
Chief of the northern chivalry.

"What more?" demanded the abbot, seeing that the monk appeared to hesitate.

"Nay, I know not whether the rest of the rhymes may please you, lord abbot," replied Father Eastgate.

"Let me hear them and I will judge," said Paslew.

Thus urged, the monk went on:—

One shall sit at a solemn feast,
Half warrior, half priest,
The greatest there shall be the least.

"The last verse," observed the monk, "has been added to the ditty by Nicholas Demdike. I heard him sing it the other day at the abbey gate."

"What! Nicholas Demdike of Worston?" cried the abbot; "he whose wife is a witch?"

"The same," replied Eastgate.

"Hoo be so cawnted, sure eno'," remarked the forester, who had been listening attentively to their discourse, and who now stepped forward;

"boh dunna yo' think it. Beleemy, lort abbut, Bess Demdike's too yunk an too protty for a witch."

"Thou art bewitched by her thyself, Cuthbert," said the abbot, angrily. "I shall impose a penance upon thee to free thee from the evil influence. Thou must recite twenty paternosters daily, fasting, for one month; and afterwards perform a pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady of Gilsland. Bess Demdike is an approved and notorious witch, and hath been seen by credible witnesses attending a devil's sabbath on this very hill—Heaven shield us! It is therefore that I have placed her and her husband under the ban of the church; pronounced sentence of excommunication against them; and commanded all my clergy to refuse baptism to their infant daughter, newly born."

"Wea's me! ey knoas 't reet weel, lort abbut," replied Ashbead, "and Bess taks t' sentence sore ta 'ert!"

"Then let her amend her ways, or heavier punishment will befal her," cried Paslew, severely. "'*Sortilegam non patieris vivere*,' saith the Levitical law. If she be convicted she shall die the death. That she is comely I admit, but it is the comeliness of a child of sin. Dost thou know the man with whom she is wedded—or supposed to be wedded—for I have seen no proof of the marriage? He is a stranger here."

"Ey knoas neawt abowt him, lort abbut, 'cept that he cum to Pendle a twalmont' agoa," replied Ashbead; "boh ey knoas fu' weel that t'eawtcumbling felly robt me o' t' prottiest lass i' aw Lonkyshiar—aigh, or i' aw Englondshiar, fo' t' matter o' that."

"What manner of man is he?" inquired the abbot.

"Oh, he's a feaw teyke—a varra feaw teyke," replied Ashbead; "wi' a feace as black as a boggart, sooty shoiny hewr loike a mowdywarp, an een loike a stanniel. Boh for running, rostling, an throwing t' stoan he'n no match i' this keawntry. Ey'n triet him at aw three gam's, so ey con speak. For't most part he'n a big, black bandyhewit wi' him, and, by th' Mess, ey canna help thinkin' he meys free sumtoimes wi' yor lortship's bucks."

"Ha! this must be looked to," cried the abbot. "You say you know not whence he comes? 'Tis strange."

"T' missmannert carl 'll boide naw questionin', odd rottle him!" replied Ashbead. "He awnsurs wi' a gibe, or a thwack o' his staff. Whon ey last seet him, he threatened t' raddle me booans weel, boh ey sooan lowert him a peg."

"We will find a way of making him speak," said the abbot.

"He can speak, and right well if he pleases," remarked Father Eastgate; "for though ordinarily silent and sullen enough, yet when he doth talk, it is not like one of the hinds with whom he consorts, but in good set phrase; and his bearing is as bold as that of one who hath seen service in the field."

"My curiosity is aroused," said the abbot. "I must see him."

"Noa sooner said than done," cried Ashbead, "for be t' Lord Harry, ey see him stonding be yon moss poo' o' top t' hill, though how he'n getten theer t' dule owny knoas."

And he pointed out a tall, dark figure standing near a little pool on the summit of the mountain, about a hundred yards from them.

"Talk of ill, and ill cometh," observed Father Haydocke. "And see the wizard hath a black hound with him. It may be his wife, in that likeness."

"Naw, ey knoas t' hount reet weel, Feyther Haydocke," replied the forester; "it's a Saint Hubert, an a rare un fo' fox or badgert. Odds loife, feyther, whoy that's t' black bandyhewit I war speaking on."

"I like not the appearance of the knave at this juncture," said the abbot, "yet I wish to confront him, and charge him with his misdemeanours."

"Hark, he sings," cried Father Haydocke. And as he spoke, a voice was heard chanting—

One shall sit at a solemn feast,
Half warrior, half priest,
The greatest there shall be the least.

"The very ditty I heard," cried Father Eastgate; "but list, he has more of it." And the voice resumed—

He shall be rich, yet poor as me,
Abbot, and Earl of Poverty;
Monk and soldier, rich and poor,
He shall be hang'd at his own door.

Loud derisive laughter followed the song.

"By our Lady of Whalley, the knave is mocking us," cried the abbot; "send a bolt to silence him, Cuthbert."

The forester instantly bent his bow, and a quarrel whistled off in the direction of the singer, but whether his aim were not truly taken, or he meant not to hit the mark, it is certain that Demdike remained untouched. The reputed wizard laughed aloud, took off his felt cap in acknowledgment, and marched deliberately down the side of the hill.

"Thou art not wont to miss thy aim, Cuthbert," cried the abbot, with a look of displeasure. "Take good heed thou producest this scurril knave before me, when these troublous times are over. But what is this?—he stops—ha! he is practising his devilries on the mountain's side."

It would seem that the abbot had good warrant for what he said, as Demdike, having paused at a broad green patch on the hill side, was now busied in tracing a circle round it with his staff. He then spoke aloud some words, which the superstitious beholders construed into an incantation, and after tracing the circle once again, and casting some tufts of dry heather, which he plucked from an adjoining hillock, on three particular spots, he ran quickly downwards, followed by his hound, and leaping a stone wall, surrounding a little orchard, at the foot of the hill, disappeared from view.

"Go and see what he hath done," cried the abbot to the forester, "for I like it not."

Ashbead instantly obeyed, and on reaching the green spot in question, shouted out that he could discern nothing, but presently added, as he moved about, that the turf heaved like a sway-bed beneath his feet, and he thought—to use his own phraseology—would "brast." The abbot then commanded him to go down to the orchard below, and if he could find Demdike, to bring him to him instantly. The forester did as he was bidden, ran down the hill, and, leaping the orchard-wall as the other had done, was lost to sight.

Ere long, it became quite dark, and as Ashbead did not re-appear, the abbot gave vent to his impatience and uneasiness, and was proposing to send one of the herdsmen in search of him, when his attention was sud-

denly diverted by a loud shout from one of the sentinels, and a fire was seen on a distant hill on the right.

"The signal! the signal!" cried Paslew, joyfully. "Kindle a torch! —quick, quick!"

And as he spoke, he seized a brand and plunged it into the peat fire, while his example was followed by the two monks.

"It is the beacon on Blackstone Edge," cried the abbot; "and look! a second blazes over the Grange of Cliviger—another on Ightenhill—another on Boulsworth Hill—and the last on the neighbouring heights of Padiham. Our own comes next. May it light the enemies of our holy church to perdition!"

With this, he applied the burning brand to the combustible matter of the beacon. The monks did the same; and in an instant a tall, pointed flame, rose up from a thick cloud of smoke. Ere another minute had elapsed, similar fires shot up to the right and the left, on the high lands of Trawden Forest, on the jagged points of Foulridge, on the summit of Cowling Hill, and so on to Skipton. Other fires again blazed on the towers of Clithero, on Longridge and Ribchester, on the woody eminences of Bowland, on Wolf Crag, and on fell and scar all the way to Lancaster. It seemed the work of enchantment, so suddenly and so strangely did the fires shoot forth. As the beacon-flame increased, it lighted up the whole of the extensive table-land on the summit of Pendle Hill; and a long, lurid streak fell on the darkling moss-pool near which the wizard had stood. But when it attained its utmost height, it revealed the depths of the forest below, and a red reflection, here and there, marked the course of Pendle Water. The excitement of the abbot and his companions momently increased, and the sentinels shouted as each new beacon was lighted. At last, almost every hill had its watch-fire, and so extraordinary was the spectacle, that it seemed as if weird beings were abroad, and holding their revels on the heights.

Then it was that the abbot, mounting his steed, called out to the monks—"Holy fathers, you will follow to the abbey as you may. I shall ride fleetly on, and despatch two hundred archers to Huddersfield and Wakefield. The Abbots of Salley and Jervaux, with the Prior of Burlington, will be with me at midnight, and at day-break we shall march our forces to join the main army. Heaven be with you!"

"Stay!" cried a harsh, imperious voice. "Stay!"

And, to his surprise, the abbot beheld Nicholas Demdike standing before him. The aspect of the wizard was dark and forbidding, and seen by the beacon light, his savage features, blazing eyes, tall gaunt frame, and fantastic garb, made him look like something unearthly. Flinging his staff over his shoulder, he slowly approached, with his black hound following close by at his heels.

"I have a caution to give you, lord abbot," he said; "hear me speak before you set out for the abbey, or ill will befal you."

"Ill *will* befal me if I listen to thee, thou wicked churl," cried the abbot. "What hast thou done with Cuthbert Ashbead?"

"I have seen nothing of him since he sent a bolt after me at your bidding, lord abbot," replied Demdike.

"Beware, lest any harm come to him, or thou wilt rue it," cried Paslew. "But I have no time to waste on thee. Farewell, fathers.

High mass will be said in the convent-church before we set out on the expedition to-morrow morning. You will both attend it."

"You will never set out upon the expedition, lord abbot," cried Demdike, planting his staff so suddenly into the ground before the horse's head, that the animal reared and nearly threw his rider.

"How now, fellow, what mean you?" cried the abbot, furiously.

"To warn you," replied Demdike.

"Stand aside," cried the abbot, spurring his steed, "or I will trample you beneath my horse's feet."

"I might let you ride to your own doom," rejoined Demdike, with a scornful laugh, as he seized the abbot's bridle; "but you shall hear me. I tell you, you will never go forth on this expedition. I tell you that, ere to-morrow, Whalley Abbey will have passed for ever from your possession; and that if you go thither again, your life will be forfeited. Now will you listen to me?"

"I am wrong in doing so," cried the abbot, who could not, however, repress some feelings of misgiving at this alarming address. "Speak, what would you say?"

"Come out of ear-shot of the others, and I will tell you," replied Demdike. And he led the abbot's horse to some distance further on the hill.

"Your cause will fail, lord abbot," he then said. "Nay, it is lost already."

"Lost!" cried the abbot, out of all patience. "Lost! Look around. Twenty fires are in sight—ay, thirty, and every fire thou seest will summon a hundred men at the least to arms. Before an hour, five hundred men will be gathered before the gates of Whalley Abbey."

"True," replied Demdike; "but they will not own the Earl of Poverty for their leader."

"What leader will they own, then?" demanded the abbot, scornfully.

"The Earl of Derby," replied Demdike. "He is on his way thither with Lord Mounteagle, from Preston."

"Ha!" exclaimed Paslew, "let me go meet them, then. But thou triflest with me, fellow. Thou canst know nothing of this. Whence got'st thou thine information?"

"Heed it not," replied the other; "thou wilt find it correct. I tell thee, proud abbot, that this grand scheme of thine, and of thy fellows, for the restitution of the Catholic Church has failed—utterly failed."

"I tell thee thou liest, false knave," cried the abbot, striking him on the hand with his scourge. "Quit thy hold, and let me go."

"Not till I have done," replied Demdike, maintaining his grasp. "Well hast thou styled thyself Earl of Poverty, for thou art poor and miserable enough. Abbot of Whalley thou art no longer. Thy possessions will be taken from thee, and if thou returnest thy life also will be taken. If thou fleest, a price will be set upon thy head. I alone can save thee, and I will do so on one condition."

"Condition! make conditions with thee, bond-slave of Satan!" cried the abbot, gnashing his teeth. "I reproach myself that I have listened to thee so long. Stand aside, or I will strike thee dead."

"You are wholly in my power," cried Demdike, with a disdainful laugh. And as he spoke, he pressed the large, sharp bit against the charger's mouth, and backed him quickly to the very edge of the hill, the

sides of which here sloped precipitously down. The abbot would have uttered a cry, but surprise and terror kept him silent.

"Were it my desire to injure you, I could cast you down the mountain-side to certain death," pursued Demdike. "But I have no such wish. On the contrary, I will serve you, as I have said, on one condition."

"Thy condition would imperil my soul," said the abbot, full of wrath and alarm. Thou seekest in vain to terrify me into compliance. *Vade retro Sathanas!* I defy thee and all thy works."

Demdike laughed scornfully.

"The thunders of the church do not frighten me," he cried. "But look," he added, "you doubted my word when I told you the rising was at an end. The beacon-fires on Boulsworth Hill and on the Grange of Cliviger are extinguished; that on Padiham Heights is expiring—nay, it is out; and ere many minutes all these mountain watch-fires will have disappeared like lamps at the close of a feast."

"By our Lady, it is so," cried the abbot, in increasing terror. "What new jugglery is this?"

"It is no jugglery, I tell you," replied the other. "The waters of the Don have again arisen; the insurgents have accepted the king's pardon, have deserted their leaders, and dispersed. There will be no rising to-night or on the morrow. The Abbots of Jervaux and Salley will strive to capitulate, but in vain. The Pilgrimage of Grace is ended. The stake for which thou playedst is lost. Thirty years hast thou governed here, but thy rule is over. Seventeen abbots have there been of Whalley—the last thou!—but there shall be none more."

"It must be the demon in person that speaks thus to me," cried the abbot, his hair bristling on his head, and a cold perspiration bursting from his pores.

"No matter who I am," replied the other; "I have said I will aid thee on one condition. It is not much. Remove thy ban from my wife, and baptise her infant daughter, and I am content. I would not ask thee for this service, slight though it be, but the poor soul hath set her mind upon it. Wilt thou do it?"

"No," replied the abbot, shuddering; "I will not baptise a daughter of Satan. I will not sell my soul to the powers of darkness. I adjure thee to depart from me, and tempt me no longer."

"Vainly thou seekest to cast me off," rejoined Demdike. "What if I deliver thine adversaries into thine hands, and avenge thee upon them? Even now there are a party of armed men waiting at the foot of the hill to seize thee and thy brethren. Shall I show thee how to destroy them?"

"Who are they?" demanded the abbot, surprised.

"Their leaders are John Braddyll and Richard Assheton, who shall divide Whalley Abbey between them, if thou stayest them not," replied Demdike.

"Hell consume them!" cried the abbot.

"Thy speech shows consent," rejoined Demdike. "Come this way."

And, without awaiting the abbot's reply, he dragged his horse towards the butt-end of the mountain. As they went on, the two monks, who had been filled with surprise at the interview, though they did not dare to interrupt it, advanced towards their superior, and looked earnestly and inquiringly at him, but he remained silent, while to the men-at-arms and the herdsmen, who demanded whether their own beacon-fire should be ex-

tinguished as the others had been, he answered moodily in the negative.

"Where are the foes you spoke of?" he asked, with some uneasiness, as Demdike led his horse slowly and carefully down the hill-side.

"You shall see, anon," replied the other.

"You are taking me to the spot where you traced the magic circle," cried Paslew, in alarm. "I know it from its unnaturally green hue. I will not go thither."

"I do not mean you should, lord abbot," replied Demdike, halting. "Remain on this firm ground. Nay, be not alarmed, you are in no danger. Now bid your men advance, and prepare their weapons."

The abbot would have demanded wherefore, but at a glance from Demdike he complied, and the two men-at-arms, and the herdsmen, arranged themselves beside him, while Fathers Eastgate and Haydocke, who had gotten upon their mules, took up a position behind.

Scarcely were they thus placed, when a loud shout was raised below, and a band of armed men, to the number of thirty or forty, leapt the stone wall, and began to scale the hill with great rapidity. They came up a deep, dry channel, apparently worn in the hill side by some former torrent, and which led directly to the spot where Demdike and the abbot stood. The beacon-fire still blazed brightly, and illuminated the whole proceeding, showing that these men, from their accoutrements, were royalist soldiers.

"Stir not, as you value your life," said the wizard to Paslew; "but observe what shall follow."

Chapter II.

THE ERUPTION.

Demdike went a little further down the hill, stopping when he came to the green patch. He then plunged his staff into the sod at the first point where he had cast a tuft of heather, and with such force that it sank more than three feet. The next moment he plucked it forth, as if with a great effort, and a jet of black water spouted into the air; but heedless of this, he went to the next marked spot, and again plunged the sharp point of the implement into the ground. Again it sank to the same depth, and, on being drawn out, a second black jet sprung forth.

Meanwhile, the hostile party continued to advance up the dry channel before mentioned, and shouted on beholding these strange preparations, but they did not relax their speed. Once more the staff sank into the ground, and a third black fountain followed its extraction. By this time, the royalist soldiers were close at hand, and the features of their two leaders, John Braddyll and Richard Assheton, could be plainly distinguished, and their voices heard.

"'Tis he! 'tis the rebel abbot!" vociferated Braddyll, pressing forward. "We were not misinformed. He has been watching by the beacon. The devil has delivered him into our hands."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Demdike.

"Abbot no longer—'tis the Earl of Poverty you mean," responded Assheton. "The villain shall be gibbeted on the spot where he has fired the beacon, as a warning to all traitors."

"Ha, heretics!—ha, blasphemers!—I can at least avenge myself upon you," cried Paslew, striking spurs into his charger. But ere he could

execute his purpose, Demdike had sprung backward, and catching the bridle, restrained the animal by a powerful effort.

"Hold!" he cried, in a voice of thunder, "or you will share their fate."

As these words were uttered, a dull, booming, subterranean sound was heard, and instantly afterwards, with a crash like thunder, the whole of the green circle beneath slipped off, and from a yawning rent under it burst forth, with irresistible fury, a thick, inky-coloured torrent, which, rising almost breast high, fell upon the devoted royalist soldiers, who were advancing right in its course. Unable to avoid the watery eruption, or to resist its fury when it came upon them, they were instantly swept from their feet, and carried down the channel.

A sight of horror was it to behold the sudden rise of that swarthy stream, whose waters, tinged by the ruddy glare of the beacon-fire, looked like waves of blood. Nor less fearful was it to hear the first wild despairing cry raised by the victims, or the quickly-stifled shrieks and groans that followed, mixed with the deafening roar of the stream, and the crashing fall of the stones which accompanied its course. Down, down, went the poor wretches, now utterly overwhelmed by the torrent, now regaining their feet only to utter a scream, and then be swept off. Here a miserable struggler, whirled onward, would clutch at the banks and try to scramble forth, but the soft turf giving way beneath him, he was hurried off to eternity.

At another point, where the stream encountered some trifling opposition, some two or three managed to gain a footing, but they were unable to extricate themselves. The vast quantity of boggy soil brought down by the current, and which rapidly collected here, embedded them and held them fast, so that the momently-deepening water, already up to their chins, threatened speedy immersion. Others were stricken down by great masses of turf, or huge rocky fragments, which, bounding from point to point with the torrent, bruised or crushed all they encountered, or lodging in some difficult place, slightly diverted the course of the torrent, and rendered it yet more dangerous.

On one of these stones, larger than the rest, which had been stopped in its course, a man contrived to creep, and with difficulty kept his post amid the raging flood. Vainly did he extend his hand to such of his fellows as were swept shrieking past him. He could not lend them aid, while his own position was so desperately hazardous that he did not dare to quit it. To leap on either bank was impossible, and to breast the headlong stream certain death.

On goes the current, madly, furiously, as if rejoicing in the work of destruction, while the white foam of its eddies presents a fearful contrast to the prevailing blackness of the surface. Over the last declivity it leaps, hissing, foaming, crashing like an avalanche. The stone wall for a moment opposes its force, but falls the next, with a mighty splash, carrying the spray far and wide, while its own fragments roll onwards with the stream. The trees of the orchard are uprooted in an instant, and an old elm falls prostrate. The outbuildings of a cottage are invaded, and the porkers and cattle, divining their danger, squeal and bellow in affright. But they are quickly silenced. The resistless foe has broken down wall and door, and buried the poor creatures in mud and rubbish.

The stream next invades the cottage, breaks in through door and

window, and filling all the lower part of the tenement, in a few minutes converts it into a heap of ruin. On goes the destroyer, tearing up more trees, levelling more houses, and filling up a small pool, till the latter bursts its banks, and with an accession to its force, pours itself into a mill-dam. Here its waters are stayed until they find a vent underneath, and the action of the stream as it rushes downwards through this exit, forms a great eddy above, in which swim some living things, cattle and sheep from the fold not yet drowned, mixed with furniture from the cottages, and amidst them the bodies of some of the unfortunate men-at-arms which have been washed hither.

But ha! another thundering crash. The dam has burst. The torrent roars and rushes on furiously as before, joins its forces with Pendle Water, swells up the river, and devastates the country far and wide.*

The abbot and his companions beheld this work of destruction with amazement and dread. Blanched terror sat in their cheeks, and the blood was frozen in Paslew's veins, for he thought it the work of the powers of darkness, and that he was leagued with them. He tried to mutter a prayer, but his lips refused their office. He would have moved, but his limbs were stiffened and paralysed, and he could only gaze aghast at the terrible spectacle.

Amidst it all he heard a wild burst of unearthly laughter proceeding, he thought, from Demdike, and it filled him with new dread. But he could not check the sound, neither could he stop his ears, though he would fain have done so. Like him, his companions were petrified and speechless with fear.

After this had endured for some time, though still the black torrent rushed on impetuously as ever, Demdike turned to the abbot, and said—

"Your vengeance has been fully gratified. You will now baptise my child."

"Never, never, accursed being!" shrieked the abbot. "Thou mayst sacrifice her at thine own impious rites. But see, there is one poor wretch yet struggling with the foaming torrent. I may save him."

"That is John Braddyll, thy worst enemy," replied Demdike. "If he lives he shall possess half Whalley Abbey. Thou hadst best also save Richard Assheton, who yet clings to the great stone below, as, if he escapes, he shall have the other half. Mark him, and make haste, for in five minutes both shall be gone."

"I will save them if I can, be the consequence to myself what it may," replied the abbot.

* A similar eruption occurred at Pendle Hill in August, 1669, and has been described by Mr. Charles Townley, in a letter cited by Dr. Whitaker in his excellent "History of Whalley." Other and more formidable eruptions had taken place previously, occasioning much damage to the country. The cause of the phenomenon is thus explained by Mr. Townley:—"The colour of the water, its coming down to the place where it breaks forth between the rock and the earth, with that other particular of its bringing nothing along but stones and earth, are evident signs that it hath not its origin from the very bowels of the mountain; but that it is only rain-water coloured first in the moss-pits, of which the top of the hill, being a great and considerable plain, is full, shrunk down into some receptacle fit to contain it, until at last, by its weight or some other cause, it finds a passage to the sides of the hill, and then away between the rock and swarth, until it break the latter and violently rush out."

And regardless of the derisive laughter of the other, who yelled in his ears as he went, "Bess shall see thee hanged at thy own door," he dashed down the hill to the spot where a small object, distinguishable above the stream, showed that some one still kept his head above water, his tall stature having preserved him.

"Is it you, John Braddyll?" cried the abbot, as he rode up.

"Ay," replied the head. "Forgive me for the wrong I intended you, and deliver me from this great peril."

"I am come for that purpose," replied the abbot, dismounting, and disencumbering himself of his heavy cloak.

By this time the two herdsmen had come up, and the abbot, taking a crook from one of them, clutched hold of the fellow, and plunging fearlessly into the stream, extended it towards the drowning man, who instantly lifted up his hand to grasp it. In doing so, Braddyll lost his balance, but as he did not quit his hold, he was plucked forth from the tenacious mud, by the combined efforts of the abbot and his assistant, and with some difficulty dragged ashore.

"Now for the other," cried Paslew, as he placed Braddyll in safety.

"One-half the abbey is gone from thee," shouted a voice in his ears, as he rushed on.

Presently he reached the rocky fragment on which Ralph Assheton rested. The latter was in great danger from the surging torrent, and the stone on which he had taken refuge tottered at its base, and threatened to roll over.

"In Heaven's name help me, lord abbot, as thou thyself shall be holpen at thy need," shrieked Assheton.

"Be not afraid, Richard Assheton," replied Paslew. "I will deliver thee as I have delivered John Braddyll."

But the task was not of easy accomplishment. The abbot made his preparations as before; grasped the hand of the herdsman, and held out the crook to Assheton; but when the latter caught it, the stream swung him round with such force, that the abbot must either abandon him, or advance further into the water. Bent on Assheton's preservation, he adopted the latter expedient, and instantly lost his feet; while the herdsman, unable longer to hold him, let go the crook, and the abbot and Assheton were swept down the stream together.

Down — down they went, destruction apparently awaiting them; but the abbot, though sometimes quite under the water, and bruised by the rough stones and gravel with which he came in contact, still retained his self-possession, and encouraged his companion to hope for succour. In this way they were borne down to the foot of the hill; the monks, the herdsmen, and the men-at-arms having given them up as lost. But they yet lived—yet floated—though greatly injured, and almost senseless, when they were cast into a pool formed by the eddying waters at the foot of the hill. Here, wholly unable to assist himself, Assheton was seized by a black hound belonging to a tall man, who stood on the bank, and who shouted to Paslew, as he helped the animal to bring the drowning man ashore,

"The other half of the abbey is gone from thee. Wilt thou baptise my child, if I send my dog to save thee?"

"Never!" replied the other, sinking as he spoke.

Flashes of fire glanced in the abbot's eyes, and stunning sounds seemed to burst his ears. A few more struggles and he became senseless.

But he was not destined to die thus. What happened afterwards he knew not, but when he recovered full consciousness, he found himself stretched, with aching limbs and throbbing head, upon a couch in a monastic room, with a richly painted and gilded ceiling, with shields at the corners emblazoned with the three luces of Whalley, and with panels hung with tapestry from the looms of Flanders, representing divers Scriptural subjects.

"Have I been dreaming?" he murmured.

"No," replied a tall man standing by his bed-side; "thou hast been saved from one death to suffer another more ignominious."

"Ha!" cried the abbot, starting up and pressing his hand to his temples; "thou here?"

"Ay, I am appointed to watch thee," replied Demdike. "Thou art a prisoner in thine own chamber at Whalley. All has befallen as I told thee. The Earl of Derby is master of the abbey; thy adherents are dispersed; and thy brethren are driven forth. Thy two partners in rebellion, the abbots of Jervaux and Salley, have been conveyed to Lancaster Castle, whither thou wilt go, as soon as thou canst be moved."

"I will surrender all—silver and gold, land and possessions—to the king, if I may die in peace," groaned the abbot.

"It is not needed," rejoined the other. "Attainted of felony, thy lands and abbey will be forfeited to the crown, and they shall be sold, as I have told thee, to John Braddyll and Richard Assheton, who will be rulers here in thy stead."

"Would I had perished in the flood!" groaned the abbot.

"Well mayst thou wish so," returned his tormentor; "but thou wert not destined to die by water. As I have said, thou shalt be hanged at thy own door, and my wife shall witness thy end."

"Who art thou? I have heard thy voice before," cried the abbot. "It is like the voice of one whom I knew years ago, and thy features are like his—though changed—greatly changed. Who art thou?"

"Thou shalt know before thou diest," replied the other, with a look of gratified vengeance. "Farewell, and reflect upon thy fate."

So saying, he strode towards the door, while the miserable abbot arose, and marching with uncertain steps to a little oratory adjoining, which he himself had built, knelt down before the altar, and strove to pray.

Chapter III.

WHALLEY ABBEY.

A sad, sad change hath come over the fair Abbey of Whalley. It knoweth its old masters no longer. For upwards of two centuries and a half hath the "Blessed Place"* grown in beauty and riches. Seventeen abbots have exercised unbounded hospitality within it, but now they are all gone save one!—and he is attainted of felony and treason. The grave monk walketh no more in the cloisters, nor seeketh his pallet in the dor-

* Locus Benedictus de Whalley.

mitory. Vesper or matin-song resound not as of old within the fine conventual church. Stripped are the altars of their silver crosses, and the shrines of their votive offerings and saintly relics. Pyx and chalice, thuribule and vial, golden-headed pastoral staff, and mitre embossed with pearls, candlestick and Christmas ship of silver; salver, basin, and ewer—all are gone—the splendid sacristy hath been despoiled.

A sad, sad change hath come over Whalley Abbey. The libraries, well stored with reverend tomes, have been pillaged, and their contents cast to the flames; and thus long laboured manuscript, the fruit of years of patient industry, with gloriously-illuminated missal, are irrecoverably lost. The large infirmary no longer receiveth the sick; in the locutory sitteth no more the guest. No longer in the mighty kitchens are prepared the prodigious supply of meats destined for the support of the poor or the entertainment of the traveller. No kindly porter stands at the gate, to bid the stranger enter and partake of the munificent abbot's hospitality, but a churlish guard bids him hie away, and menaces him, if he tarries, with his halbert. Closed are the buttery-hatches and the pantries; and the daily dole of bread hath ceased. Closed, also, to the brethren is the refectory. The cellarer's office is ended. The strong ale which he brewed in October, is tapped in March by roystering troopers. The rich muscadel and malmsey, and the wines of Gascoigne and the Rhine are no longer quaffed by the abbot and his more honoured guests, but drunk to his destruction by his foes. The great gallery, a hundred and fifty feet in length, the pride of the abbot's lodging, and a model of architecture, is filled, not with white-robed ecclesiastics, but with an armed earl and his retainers. Neglected is the little oratory dedicated to Our Lady of Whalley, where night and morn the abbot used to pray. All the old religious and hospitable uses of the abbey are foregone. The reverend stillness of the cloisters, scarce broken by the quiet tread of the monks, is now disturbed by armed heel and clank of sword; while in its saintly courts are heard the ribald song, the profane jest, and the angry brawl. Of the brethren, only those tenanting the cemetery are left. All else are gone, driven forth, as vagabonds, with stripes and curses, to seek refuge where they may.

A sad, sad change has come over Whalley Abbey. In the plenitude of its pride and power has it been cast down, desecrated, despoiled. Its treasures are carried off, its ornaments sold, its granaries emptied, its possessions wasted, its storehouses sacked, its cattle slaughtered and sold. But though stripped of its wealth and splendour; though deprived of all the religious graces that, like rich incense, lent an odour to the fane, its external beauty is yet unimpaired, and its vast proportions undiminished.

A stately pile was Whalley—one of the loveliest as well as the largest in the realm. Carefully had it been preserved by its reverend rulers, and where reparations or additions were needed they were judiciously made. Thus age had lent it beauty, by mellowing its freshness and toning its hues, while no decay was perceptible. Without a struggle had it yielded to the captor, so that no part of its wide belt of walls or towers, though so strongly constructed as to have offered effectual resistance, were injured.

Never had Whalley Abbey looked more beautiful than on a bright, clear morning in March, when this sad change had been wrought, and

when, from a peaceful monastic establishment, it had been converted into a menacing fortress. The sunlight sparkled upon its grey walls, and filled its three great quadrangular courts with light and life, piercing the exquisite carving of its cloisters, and revealing all the intricate beauty and combinations of the arches. Stains of painted glass fell upon the floor of the magnificent conventual church, and dyed with rainbow hues the marble tombs of the Lacies, the founders of the establishment, brought thither when the monastery was removed from Stanlaw in Cheshire, and upon the brass-covered grave-stones of the abbots in the presbytery. There lay Gregory de Northbury, eighth abbot of Stanlaw and first of Whalley, and William Rede, the last abbot; but there was never to lie John Paslew. The slumber of the ancient prelates was soon to be disturbed, and the sacred structure within which they had so often worshipped upreared by sacrilegious hands. But all was bright and beauteous now, and if no solemn strains were heard in the holy pile, its stillness was scarcely less reverential and awe-inspiring. The old abbey wreathed itself in all its attractions, as if to welcome back its former ruler, whereas it was only to receive him as a captive doomed to a felon's death.

But this was outward show. Within all was terrible preparation. Such was the discontented state of the country, that, fearing some new revolt, the Earl of Derby had taken measures for the defence of the abbey, and along the wide-circling walls of the close were placed ordnance and men, and within the grange stores of ammunition. A strong guard was set at each of the gates, and the courts were filled with troops. The bray of the trumpet echoed within the close, where rounds were set for the archers, and martial music resounded within the area of the cloisters. Over the great north-eastern gateway, which formed the chief entrance to the abbot's lodging, floated the royal banner. Despite these warlike proceedings, the fair abbey smiled beneath the sun, in all, or more than all, its pristine beauty, its green hills sloping gently down towards it, and the clear and sparkling Calder dashing merrily over the stones at its base.

But upon the bridge, and by the river-side, and within the little village, many persons were assembled, conversing gravely and anxiously together, and looking out towards the hills, where other groups were gathered, as if in expectation of some afflicting event. Most of these were herdsmen and farming men, but some among them were poor monks in the white habits of the Cistertian brotherhood, but which were now stained and threadbare, while their countenances bore traces of severest privation and suffering. All the herdsmen and farmers had been retainers of the abbot. The poor monks looked wistfully at their former habitation, but replied not except by a gentle bowing of the head to the cruel scoffs and taunts with which they were greeted by the passing soldiers; but the sturdy rustics did not bear these outrages so tamely, and more than one brawl ensued, in which blood flowed, while a ruffianly arquebussier would have been drowned in the Calder, but for the exertions to save him of a monk whom he had attacked.

This took place on the eleventh of March, 1537—more than three months after the date of the watching by the beacon before recorded—and the event anticipated by the concourse without the abbey, as well as by those within its walls, was the arrival of Abbot Paslew and

Fathers Eastgate and Haydocke, who were to be brought on that day from Lancaster, and executed on the following morning before the abbey, according to sentence passed upon them.

The gloomiest object in the picture remains to be described, but yet it is necessary to its completion. This was a gallows of unusual form and height, erected on the summit of a gentle hill, rising immediately in front of the abbot's lodgings, called the Holehouses, whose rounded, bosomy beauty, it completely destroyed. This terrible apparatus of condign punishment was regarded with abhorrence by the rustics, and it required a strong guard to be kept constantly round it to preserve it from demolition.

Amongst a group of rustics collected on the road leading to the north-east gateway, was Cuthbert Ashbead, who, having been deprived of his forester's office, was now habited in a frieze doublet and hose, with a short camlet cloak on his shoulder, and a fox-skin cap, embellished with the grinning jaws of the beast, on his head.

"Eigh, Ruchot o' Roaph's," he observed to a bystander, "that's a fearfo seet that gallas. Yoan been up to t' Holehouses to tey a look at it, beloike?"

"Naw, naw, ey dunna loike such seets," replied Ruchot o' Roaph's; "besoide, there wor a great rabblement at t' geate, an one o' them lunjus archer chaps knockt meh o' t' nob wi' his poike, an towd me he'd hong me wi' t' abbut, if ey didna keep owt ot wey."

"And sarve te reet too, theaw craddinly carl!" cried Ashbead, doubling his horny fists. "Odds flesh! whey didna yo ha' a tussle wi' him? Mey honts are itchen for a bowt wi' t' heretic robbers. Walladey! walladey! that we should live to see t' oly feythers driven loike hummobees owt o' t' owd neest. Whey they sayn ot King Harry hon decreet ot we're to ha' naw more monks or friars i' aw Englondshiar. Ony think o' that. And dunna yo knoa that t' Abbuts o' Jervaux an Salley wor hongt o' Tizeday at Loncaster Castle?"

"Good lorjus bless us!" exclaimed a sturdy hind, "we'n a protty king. Furst he chops off his woife's heaod, an then hongs aw t' priests. Whot'll t' warlt cum to!"

"Eigh, by t' mess, whot *win* it cum to?" cried Ruchot o' Roaph's. "But we darrna oppen owr mows fo' fear o' a gog."

"Naw, beleady! boh eyst oppen moine woide enuff," cried Ashbead; "an if a dozen o' yo chaps win join me, eyn try to set t' poor abbut free whon they brinks him here."

"Ey'd as leef boide till to-morrow," said Ruchot o' Roaph's, uneasily.

"Eigh, thou'rt a timmersome teyke, os ey towd te efore," replied Ashbead. "But whot dust theaw say, Hal o' Nabs?" he added, to the sturdy hind who had recently spoken.

"Ey'n spill t' last drop o' meh blood i' t' owd abbut's keawse," replied Hal o' Nabs. "We widna stond by, an see him hongt loike a dog. Abbut Paslew to t' reskew, lads!"

"Eigh, Abbut Paslew to t' reskew!" responded all the others, except Ruchot o' Roaph's.

"This must be prevented," muttered a voice near them. And immediately afterwards a tall man quitted the group.

"Whoa wor it spoake?" cried Hal o' Nabs. "Oh, ey seen, that hewitch, Nick Demdike."

"Nick Demdike here!" cried Ashbead, looking round in alarm. "Has he owerheert us?"

"Loike enow," replied Hal o' Nabs. "But ey didna moind him efore."

"Naw ey noather," cried Ruchot o' Roaph's, crossing himself, and spitting on the ground. "Owr Leady o' Whalley shielt us fro' t' warlock!"

"Tawkin o' Nick Demdike," cried Hal o' Nabs, "yo'd a strawnge odventer wi' him t' neet o' t' great brast o' Pendle Hill, hadna yo, Cuthbert?"

"Yeigh, t' firrups tak' him, ey hadn," replied Ashbead. "Theawst hear aw abowt it if t' will. Ey wur sent be t' abbut down t' hill to Owen o' Gab's, o' Perkin's, o' Dannel's, o' Noll's, o' Oamfrey's orchert i' Warston lone, to luk efter him. Weel, whon ey gets ower t' stoan wa', whot dun yo think ey sees! twanty or throtty poikemen stonding behint it, an they deshes at meh os thick os leet, an efore ey con roor oot, they blintfowlt meh, an clap an iron gog i' meh mouth. Weel, I con noather speak nor see, boh ey con use meh feet, soh ey punses at 'em reet an laft; an be meh troath, lads, yood'n a leawght t' hear how they roart, an ey should a roart too, if I couldn, whon they began to thwack me wi' their raddling pows, an ding'd meh so abowt t' heaod, that ey fell i' a swownd. Whon ey cum to, ey wur loyin o' meh back i' Rimington Moor. Every booan i' meh hoide wratcht, an meh hewr war clottert wi' gore, boh t' eebond an t' gog wur gone, soh ey gets o' meh feet, an daddles along os weel os ey con, whon aw ot wunce ey spies a leet glenting efore meh, an dawncing abowt loike an awf or a wull-o'-whisp. Thinks ey, that's Friar Rush an his lantern, an he'll lead me into a quagmire, soh ey stops a bit, to consider where ey'd getten, for ey didna knoa t' reet road exactly; boh whon ey stood still, t' leet stood still too, on then ey meyd owt that it cum fro an owd ruint tower, an whot ey'd fancied wur one lantern proved twanty, fo' whon ey reacht t' tower an peept in thro' a brok'n winda, ey beheld a seet ey'st neer forgit—apack o' witches—eigh, witches!—sittin' in a ring, wi' their broomsticks an lanterns abowt 'em!"

"Good lorjus deys!" cried Hal o' Nabs. "An whot else didsta see, mon?"

"Whoy," replied Ashbead, "t' owd hags had a little figure i' t' midst on 'em, mowded i' cley, representing t' Abbut o' Whalley—ey knoad it be t' moitre an crosier—an efter each o' t' varment had stickt a pin i' its 'eart, a tall black mon stepped for'ard, an teed a cord rownd its throttle, an hongt it up."

"An' t' black mon," cried Hal o' Nabs, breathlessly,—"t' black mon wur Nick Demdike?"

"Yoan guest it," replied Ashbead, "'t wur he! Ey wur so glopp'nt, ey couldna speak, an meh blud fruz i' meh veins, when ey heerd a fearfo voice ask Nick wheere his woife an' chilt were. 'The infant is unbaptised,' roart t' voice, 'at the next meeting it must be sacrificed. See that thou bring it.' Demdike then bowed to summat I couldna see, an axt when t' next meeting wur to be held. 'On the night of Abbot Paslew's execution,' awnsert t' voice. On hearing this, ey could bear nah lunger, boh shouted out, 'Witches! devils! Lort deliver us fro' ye!' An os ey spoke, ey tried t' barst thro' t' winda. In a trice, aw t' leets went out; thar wur a great rash to t' dooer; a whirrin sound i' th' air loike a covey o' partriches fleeing off; and then ey heerd nowt more; for a great stoan

fell o' meh scoance, an knockt me down senseless. When I cum to, I wur i' Nick Demdike's cottage, wi' his woife watching ower me, and th' unbapteesed chilt i' her arms."

All exclamations of wonder on the part of the rustics, and inquiries as to the issue of the adventure, were checked by the approach of a monk, who, joining the assemblage, called their attention to a priestly train slowly advancing along the road.

"It is headed," he said, "by Fathers Chatburne and Chester, late bursers of the abbey. Alack! alack! they now need the charity themselves which they once so lavishly bestowed on others."

"Waes me!" ejaculated Ashbead. "Monry a broad merk han ey getten fro' 'em."

"They'n been koind to us aw," added the others.

"Next come Father Burnley, granger, and Father Haworth, cellarer," pursued the monk; "and after them Father Dinkley, sacristan, and Father Moore, porter."

"Yo remember Feyther Moore, lads," cried Ashbead.

"Yeigh, to be sure we done," replied the others; "a good mon, a reet good mon! He never sent away t' poor—naw he!"

"After Father Moore," said the monk, pleased with their warmth, "comes Father Forrest, the procurator, with Fathers Rede, Clough, and Bancroft, and the procession is closed by Father Smith, the late prior."

"Down o' yer whirlybooans, lads, as t' oly feythers pass," cried Ashbead, "and crave their blessing."

And as the priestly train slowly approached, with heads bowed down, and looks fixed sadly upon the ground, the rustic assemblage fell upon their knees, and implored their benediction. The foremost in the procession passed on in silence, but the prior stopped, and extending his hands over the kneeling group, cried in a solemn voice,

"Heaven bless ye, my children. Ye are about to witness a sad spectacle. You will see him who has clothed you, fed you, and taught you the way to heaven, brought hither a prisoner, to suffer a shameful death."

"Boh we'st set him free, oly prior," cried Ashbead. "We'n meayed up our moinds to 't. Yo just wait till he cums."

"Nay, I command you to desist from the attempt, if any such you meditate," rejoined the prior; "it will avail nothing, and you will only sacrifice your own lives. Our enemies are too strong. The abbot himself would give you like counsel."

Scarcely were the words uttered, than from the great gate of the abbey there issued a dozen arquebussiers with an officer at their head, who marched directly towards the kneeling hinds, evidently with the intention of dispersing them. Behind them strode Nicholas Demdike. In an instant the alarmed rustics were on their feet, and Ruchot o' Roaph's, and some few among them, took to their heels, but Ashbead, Hal o' Nabs, with half-a-dozen others, stood their ground manfully. The monks remained, in the hope of preventing any violence. Presently the halberdiers came up.

"That is the ringleader," cried the officer, who proved to be Richard Assheton, pointing out Ashbead; "seize him."

"Naw mon shall lay honts o' meh," cried Cuthbert.

And as the guard pushed past the monks to execute their leader's order,

he sprang forward, and wresting a halbert from the foremost of them, stood upon his defence.

"Seize him, I say," shouted Assheton, irritated at the resistance offered.

"Keep off," cried Ashbead; "yo'd best. Loike a stag at bey ey 'm dawngerous. Waar horns! waar horns! ey sey."

The arquebussiers looked irresolute. It was evident Ashbead would only be taken with life, and they were not sure that it was their leader's purpose to destroy him.

"Put down thy weapon, Cuthbert," interposed the prior; "it will avail thee nothing against odds like these."

"Mey be, oly prior," rejoined Ashbead, flourishing the pike; "boh ey'st ony yield wi' loife."

"I will disarm him," cried Demdike, stepping forward.

"Theaw!" retorted Ashbead, with a scornful laugh. "Cum on then. Hadsta aw t' fiends i' hell at te back, ey shouldna fear thee."

"Yield!" cried Demdike, in a voice of thunder, and fixing a terrible glance upon him.

"Cum on, wizard," rejoined Ashbead, undauntedly. But, observing that his opponent was wholly unarmed, he gave the pike to Hal o' Nabs, who was close beside him, observing, "It shall never be said that Cuthbert Ashbead feawt t' dule himsel' unfairly. Nah, touch meh if theaw dar'st."

Demdike required no further provocation. With almost supernatural force and quickness he sprung upon the forester, and seized him by the throat. But the active young man freed himself from the gripe, and closed with his assailant. But though of herculean build, it soon became evident that Ashbead would have the worst of it, when Hal o' Nabs, who had watched the struggle with intense interest, could not help coming to his friend's assistance, and made a push at Demdike with the halbert.

Could it be that the wrestlers shifted their position, or that the wizard was indeed aided by the powers of darkness? None could tell, but so it was that the pike pierced the side of Ashbead, who instantly fell to the ground, with his adversary upon him. The next instant his hold relaxed, and the wizard sprang to his feet unharmed, but deluged in blood. Hal o' Nabs uttered a cry of keenest anguish, and, flinging himself upon the body of the forester, tried to staunch the wound; but he was quickly seized by the arquebussiers, and his hands tied behind his back with a thong, while Ashbead was lifted up and borne towards the abbey, the monks and rustics following slowly after; but the latter were not permitted to enter the gate.

As the unfortunate keeper, who by this time had become insensible from loss of blood, was carried along the walled enclosure leading to the abbot's lodging, a female with a child in her arms was seen advancing from the opposite side. She was tall, finely formed, with features of remarkable beauty, though of a masculine and somewhat savage character, and with magnificent but fierce black eyes. Her skin was dark, and her hair raven black, contrasting strongly with the red band wound around it. Her kirtle was of murrey-coloured serge; simply, but becomingly fashioned. A glance sufficed to show her how matters stood with poor Ashbead, and, uttering a sharp, angry cry, she rushed towards him.

"What have you done?" she cried, fixing a keen, reproachful look on Demdike, who walked beside the wounded man.

"Nothing," replied Demdike, with a bitter laugh; "the fool has been hurt with a pike. Stand out of the way, Bess, and let the men pass. They are about to carry him to the cell under the chapter-house."

"You shall not take him there," cried Bess Demdike, fiercely. "He may recover if his wound be dressed. Let him go to the infirmary—ha, I forgot—there is no one there now."

"Father Bancroft is at the gate," observed one of the arquebussiers; "he used to act as chirurgeon in the abbey."

"No monk must enter the gate except the prisoners when they arrive," observed Assheton; "such are the positive orders of the Earl of Derby."

"It is not needed," observed Demdike; "no human aid can save the man."

"But can other aid save him?" said Bess, breathing the words in her husband's ear.

"Go to," cried Demdike, pushing her roughly aside; "wouldst have me save thy lover."

"Take heed," said Bess, in a deep whisper; "if thou save him not, by the devil thou servest! thou shalt lose me and thy child."

Demdike did not think proper to contest the point, but approaching Assheton, requested that the wounded man might be conveyed to an arched recess, which he pointed out. Assent being given, Ashbead was taken there, and placed upon the ground, after which the arquebussiers and their leader marched off, while Bess, kneeling down, supported the head of the wounded man upon her knee, and Demdike, taking a small phial from his doublet, poured some of its contents down his throat. The wizard then took a fold of linen, with which he was likewise provided, and dipping it in the elixir, applied it to the wound.

In a few moments Ashbead opened his eyes, and looking round wildly, fixed his gaze upon Bess, who placed her finger upon her lips to enjoin silence, but he could not, or would not, understand the sign.

"Aw's o'er wi' meh, Bess," he groaned, "but ey'd reyther dee thus, wi' thee besoide meh, than i' ony other wey."

"Hush!" exclaimed Bess; "Nicholas is here."

"Oh! ey see," replied the wounded man, looking round; "boh whot matters it? Ey'st be gone soon. Ah, Bess, dear lass, if theawdst promise to break thy compact wi' Satan—to repent and save thy precious sowl—ey should dee content."

"Oh, do not talk thus!" cried Bess. "You will soon be well again."

"Listen to me," continued Ashbead, earnestly; "dust na knoa that if thy babe be na bapteesed efore to-morrow neet it 'll be sacrificed to t' Prince o' Darkness? Go to some o' t' oly feythers—confess thy sins an implore Heaven's forgiveness—an mayhap they 'll save thee an thy infant."

"And be burned as a witch," rejoined Bess, fiercely. "It is useless, Cuthbert; I have tried them all. I have knelt to them, implored them, but their hearts are hard as flints. They will not heed me. They will not disobey the abbot's cruel injunctions, though he be their superior no longer. But I shall be avenged upon him—terribly avenged."

"Leave meh, theaw wicked woman," cried Ashbead; "ey dunna wish to ha' thee near meh. Let meh dee i' peace."

"Thou wilt not die, I tell thee, Cuthbert," cried Bess; "Nicholas hath staunched thy wound."

"He stawncht it, seyst to?" cried Ashbead, raising himself. "Ey'st never owe meh loife to him."

And before he could be prevented, he tore off the bandage, and the blood burst forth anew.

"It is not my fault if he perishes now," observed Demdike, moodily.

"Help him—help him!" implored Bess.

"He shanna touch meh," cried Ashbead, struggling and increasing the effusion. "Keep him off ey adjure thee. Farewell, Bess," he added, sinking back utterly exhausted by the effort.

"Cuthbert!" screamed Bess, terrified by his looks; "Cuthbert! art thou really dying? Look at me, speak to me! Ha!" she cried, as if seized by a sudden idea, "they say the blessing of a dying man will avail. Bless my child, Cuthbert, bless it!"

"Give it me!" groaned the forester.

Bess held the infant towards him, but before he could place his hands upon it all power forsook him, and he fell back and expired.

"Lost! lost! for ever lost!" cried Bess, with a wild shriek.

At this moment a loud blast was blown from the gate-tower, and a trumpeter called out,

"The abbot and the two other prisoners are coming."

"To thy feet, wench," cried Demdike, imperiously, and seizing the bewildered woman by the arm; "to thy feet, and come with me to meet him."

Chapter IV.

THE MALEDICTION.

The captive ecclesiastics, together with the strong escort by which they were attended, under the command of John Braddyll, the high sheriff of the county, had passed the previous night at Whitewell, in Bowland Forest; and the abbot, before setting out on his final journey, was permitted to spend an hour in prayer in a little chapel on an adjoining hill, overlooking a most picturesque portion of the forest, the beauties of which were enhanced by the windings of the Hodder, one of the loveliest streams in Lancashire. His devotions performed, Paslew, attended by a guard, slowly descended the hill, and gazed his last on scenes familiar to him almost from infancy. Noble trees, which now looked like old friends, to whom he was bidding an eternal adieu, stood around him. Beneath them, at the end of a glade, couched a herd of deer, which started off at sight of the intruders, and made him envy their freedom and fleetness as he followed them in thought to their solitudes. At the foot of a steep rock ran the Hodder, making the pleasant music of other days as it dashed over its pebbly bed, and recalling times when, free from all care, he had strayed by its wood-fringed banks, to listen to the pleasant sound of running waters, and watch the shining pebbles beneath them, and the swift trout and dainty umber glancing past.

A bitter pang was it to part with scenes so fair; and the abbot spoke no word, nor even looked up, until, passing Little Mitton, he came in sight of Whalley Abbey. Then, collecting all his energies, he prepared for the shock he was about to endure. But, nerved as he was, his firmness was sorely tried when he beheld the stately pile, once his own, now gone from him and his for ever. He gave one fond glance towards it, and then painfully averting his gaze, recited, in a low voice, this supplication:

"*Miserere mei Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. Et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam. Amplius lava me ab iniquitate meâ, et à peccato meo munda me.*"

But other thoughts, and other emotions, crowded upon him, when he beheld the groups of his old retainers advancing to meet him: men, women, and children, pouring forth loud lamentations, prostrating themselves at his feet, and deploring his doom. The abbot's fortitude had a severe trial here, and the tears sprung to his eyes. The devotion of these poor people touched him more sharply than the severity of his adversaries.

"Bless ye! bless ye! my children," he cried; "repine not for me, for I bear my cross with resignation. It is for me to bewail your lot, much fearing that the flock I have so long and so zealously tended will fall into the hands of other and less heedful pastors, or, still worse, of devouring wolves. Bless ye, my children, and be comforted. Think of the end of Abbot Paslew, and for what he suffered."

"Think that he was a traitor to the king, and took up arms in rebellion against him," cried the sheriff, riding up, and speaking in a loud voice; "and that for his heinous offences he was justly condemned to death."

Murmurs arose at this speech, but they were instantly checked by the escort.

"Think charitably of me, my children," said the abbot; "and the blessed Virgin keep you steadfast in your faith. Benedicite!"

"Be silent, traitor, I command thee," cried the sheriff, striking him with his gauntlet in the face.

The abbot's pale cheek burnt crimson, and his eye flashed fire, but he controlled himself, and answered meekly—

"Thou didst not speak in such wise, John Braddyll, when I saved thee from the flood."

"Which flood thou thyself caused to burst forth by devilish arts," rejoined the sheriff. "I owe thee little for the service. If for naught else, thou deservest death for thy evil doings on that night."

The abbot made no reply, for Braddyll's allusion conjured up a sombre train of thought within his breast, awakening apprehensions which he could neither account for, nor shake off. Meanwhile, the cavalcade slowly approached the north-east gateway of the abbey—passing through crowds of kneeling and sorrowing bystanders,—but so deeply was the abbot engrossed by the one dread idea that possessed him, that he saw them not, and scarce heard their woeful lamentations. All at once the cavalcade stopped, and the sheriff rode on to the gate, in the opening of which some ceremony was observed. Then it was that Paslew raised his eyes, and beheld standing before him a tall man, with a woman beside him bearing an infant in her arms. The eyes of the pair were fixed upon him with

vindictive exultation. He would have averted his gaze, but an irresistible fascination withheld him.

"Thou seest all is prepared," said Demdike, coming close up to the mule, on which Paslew was mounted, and pointing to the gigantic gallows, looming above the abbey walls; "wilt thou now accede to my request?" And then he added, significantly—"On the same terms as before."

The abbot understood his meaning well. Life and freedom were offered him by a being, whose power to accomplish his promise he did not doubt. The struggle was hard; but he resisted the temptation, and answered firmly, "No."

"Then die the felon death thou meritest," cried Bess, fiercely; "and I will glut mine eyes with the spectacle."

Incensed beyond endurance, the abbot looked sternly at her, and raised his hand, in denunciation. The action and the look were so appalling, that the affrighted woman would have fled if her husband had not restrained her.

"By the holy patriarchs and prophets; by the prelates and confessors; by the doctors of the church; by the holy abbots, monks, and eremites, who dwelt in solitudes, in mountains, and in caverns; by the holy saints and martyrs, who suffered torture and death for their faith, I curse thee, witch," cried Paslew. "May the malediction of Heaven and all its hosts alight on the head of thy infant—"

"Oh! holy abbot," shrieked Bess, breaking from her husband, and flinging herself at Paslew's feet, "curse me, if thou wilt, but spare my innocent child. Save it, and we will save thee."

"Avoid thee, wretched and impious woman," rejoined the abbot; "I have pronounced the dread anathema, and it cannot be recalled. Look at the dripping garments of thy child. In blood has it been baptised, and through blood-stained paths shall its course be taken."

"Ha!" shrieked Bess, noticing for the first time the ensanguined condition of the infant's attire. "Cuthbert's blood—oh!"

"Listen to me, wicked woman," pursued the abbot, as if filled with a prophetic spirit. "Thy child's life shall be long—beyond the ordinary term of woman,—but it shall be a life of woe and ill."

"Oh! stay him—stay him; or I shall die!" cried Bess.

But the wizard could not speak. A greater power than his own apparently overmastered him.

"Children shall she have," continued the abbot, "and children's children, but they shall be a race doomed and accursed—a brood of adders, that the world shall flee from and crush. A thing accursed, and shunned by her fellows, shall thy daughter be,—evil reputed and evil doing. No hand to help her—no lip to bless her—life a burden, and death—long, long in coming—finding her in a dismal dungeon. Now, depart from me, and trouble me no more."

Bess made a motion as if she would go, and then turning partly round, dropped heavily on the ground. Demdike caught the child ere she fell.

"Thou hast killed her!" he cried to the abbot.

"A stronger voice than mine hath spoken, if it be so," rejoined Paslew. "*Fuge miserrime, fuge malefice, quia judex adest iratus.*"

At this moment, the trumpet again sounded, and the cavalcade being

put in motion, the abbot and his fellow-captives passed through the gate.

Dismounting from their mules within the court, before the chapter-house, the captive ecclesiastics, preceded by the sheriff, were led to the principal chamber of the structure, where the Earl of Derby awaited them, seated in the Gothic carved oak chair, formerly occupied by the abbots of Whalley on the occasions of conferences or elections. The earl was surrounded by his officers, and the chamber was filled with armed men. The abbot slowly advanced towards the earl. His deportment was dignified and firm, even majestic. The exaltation of spirit, occasioned by the interview with Demdike and his wife, had passed away, and was succeeded by a profound calm. The hue of his cheek was livid, but otherwise he seemed wholly unmoved.

The ceremony of delivering up the bodies of the prisoners to the earl was gone through by the sheriff, and their sentences were then read aloud by a clerk. After this the earl, who had hitherto remained covered, took off his cap, and in a solemn voice spoke:

"John Paslew, somewhile Abbot of Whalley, but now an attainted and condemned felon, and John Eastgate and William Haydocke, formerly brethren of the same monastery, and confederates with him in crime, ye have heard your doom. To-morrow you shall die the ignominious death of traitors, but the king in his mercy, having regard not so much to the heinous nature of your offences towards his sovereign majesty as to the sacred offices you once held, and of which you have been shamefully deprived, is graciously pleased to remit that part of your sentence whereby ye are condemned to be quartered alive, willing that the hearts which conceived so much malice and violence against him should cease to beat within your own bosoms, and that the arms which were raised in rebellion against him should be interred in one common grave with the trunks to which they belong."

"God save the high and puissant king, Henry the Eighth, and free him from all traitors!" cried the clerk.

"We humbly thank his majesty for his clemency," said the abbot, amid the profound silence that ensued; "and I pray you, my good lord, when you shall write to the king concerning us, to say to his majesty that we died penitent of many and grave offences, amongst the which is chiefly that of having taken up arms unlawfully against him, but that we did so solely with the view of freeing his highness from evil counsellors, and of re-establishing our holy church, for the which we would willingly die, if our death might in anywise profit it."

"Amen!" exclaimed Father Eastgate, who stood with his hands crossed upon his breast, close behind Paslew. "The abbot hath uttered my sentiments."

"He hath not uttered mine," cried Father Haydocke. "I ask no grace from the bloody Herodias, and will accept none. What I have done I would do again, were the past to return—nay, I would do more—I would find a way to reach the tyrant's heart, and thus free our church from its worst enemy, and the land from a ruthless oppressor."

"Remove him," said the earl; "the vile traitor shall be dealt with as he merits. For you," he added, as the order was obeyed, and addressing the other prisoners, "and especially you, John Paslew, who have shown

some compunction for your crimes, and to prove to you that the king is not the ruthless tyrant he hath been just represented, I hereby in his name promise you any boon which you may ask consistently with your situation. What favour would you have shown you?"

The abbot reflected for a moment.

"Speak thou, John Eastgate," said the Earl of Derby, seeing that the abbot was occupied in thought.

"If I may proffer a request, my lord," replied the monk, "it is that our poor distraught brother, William Haydocke, be spared the quartering-block. He meant not what he said."

"Well, be it as thou wilt," replied the earl, bending his brows, "though he ill deserves such grace. Now, John Paslew, what wouldst thou?"

Thus addressed, the abbot looked up.

"I would have made the same request as my brother, John Eastgate, if he had not anticipated me, my lord," said Paslew; "but since his petition is granted, I would, on my own part, entreat that mass be said for us in the convent church. Many of the brethren are without the abbey, and, if permitted, will assist at its performance."

"I know not if I shall not incur the king's displeasure in assenting," replied the Earl of Derby, after a little reflection; "but I will hazard it. Mass for the dead shall be said in the church at midnight, and all the brethren who choose to come thither shall be permitted to assist at it. They will attend, I doubt not, for it will be the last time the rites of the Romish church will be performed in those walls. They shall have all required for the ceremonial."

"Heaven's blessings on you, my lord," said the abbot.

"But first pledge me your sacred word," said the earl, "by the holy office you once held, and by the saints in whom you trust, that this concession shall not be made the means of any attempt at flight."

"I swear it," replied the abbot, earnestly.

"And I also swear it," added Father Eastgate.

"Enough," said the earl. "I will give the requisite orders. Notice of the celebration of mass at midnight shall be proclaimed without the abbey. Now remove the prisoners."

Upon this, the captive ecclesiastics were led forth. Father Eastgate was taken to a strong room in the lower part of the chapter-house, where all acts of discipline had been performed by the monks, and where the knotted lash, the spiked girdle, and the hair shirt, had once hung; while the abbot was conveyed to his old chamber, which had been prepared for his reception, and there left alone.

NOTE TO CHAPTER II. OF THE "LANCASHIRE WITCHES."

The following interesting account of a phenomenon, somewhat similar to that described in the text, was obligingly furnished the Author by W. L. Sagar, Esq., of Southfield House, Marsden, near Burnley, in Lan-

cashire. It is extracted from the *Manchester Guardian* of September, 1824; about which time the eruption in question occurred.

ERUPTION OF CROW HILL BOG.

FINDING myself, some days since, within a few miles of Crow Hill, between Keighley and Colne, I took the opportunity of visiting that site of a recent phenomenon, which still continues to be a subject of gaping wonder to our naturally curious countrymen, who daily flock in multitudes to witness the desolating effects of the eruption. I have myself a strong thirst for novelty, and seldom suffer an occasion to pass which offers indulgence to this passion, particularly when the wonders of nature are its object; and I was the more desirous of seeing with my own eyes in this instance, as no one of the descriptions I had read presented to my mind either a vivid picture of the scene, or satisfied me of the cause and manner of the occurrence. By the lovers of the marvellous, recourse is had to earthquakes and volcanic agitation, as the mighty engines alone capable of producing such mighty effects. Thunder, lightning, and waterspouts, have furnished other artists with tools for the work. We have also had writers who, with misplaced flippancy, have endeavoured to reduce the phenomena within the limits of those accompanying ordinary torrents, and who describe the roar of this immense mass of water, rock, and earth, as proper only to alarm the parson of the parish and a few old women.

The explanation which I have to offer is simple, but I think it sufficient. I aim, however, chiefly at the record and development of the facts and localities attending this very uncommon phenomenon, which may possibly enable more skilful philosophers than myself to detect its true cause.

Crow Hill is an elevated tract of country, whose summit has been stated to be 1000 feet above the town of Keighley. I am inclined to think its height underrated. It is entirely moorland. Its peat is of a mature, perfect quality, very black when dry, and is accounted by the natives of the country an excellent fuel of its kind. The whole of this moor appears to be excessively absorbent and retentive of water, more particularly that portion of it which is now adjacent to the rifted parts. Small patches, or hillocks, bearing ling, are separated by narrow stripes of deep, soft bog, which require the pedestrian's extremest caution in his march. I have travelled over many a mile of moorland, but I never set foot on one more spongy or elastic than this. The eruption (as it has been termed) of the bog took place on the 2nd of this month, between the hours of five and six o'clock, P.M. The weather, for many days previously, had been particularly fine, and the moors were unusually dry. The 2nd of September was very sultry and hot. Rain began to fall on Crow Hill about four o'clock, P.M.; and shortly afterwards it fell at Stanbury, a village distant about three miles. It continued to rain, as the inhabitants say, "*fearfully*," till nearly six o'clock. Hail, also, fell in pieces nearly large enough to break the windows; and it thundered heavily, and lightened awfully, over Crow Hill. At about half-past five o'clock, a loud roaring noise astonished the villagers; but the rain fell in such torrents as to keep them within their houses, so that in the immediate vicinity of the mountain the first rush of the waters was seen by very few persons. Its noise is represented to have been so great as to have been heard at a distance of six and eight miles.

The rain moderated about half-past six. and ceased about seven o'clock; when the brook was lined by the natives, regarding with dismay the change which a few moments had produced upon its green and fertile banks. The flood below Stanbury appears to have been at its highest about this time, when it exhibited the appearance of a wide and rapid torrent of black water, bearing down with it large masses of bog, floating with its heather uppermost, accompanied with trees, corn, and every kind of vegetable wreck. A picture of filthier havoc can scarcely be imagined than is exhibited along the course of this stream, from Stanbury upwards towards the mountain. Bridges are burst up; parapet-walls, stone fences, mill-dams, are levelled and swept off; several holms of corn, cut or ready for the sickle, and green meadows, are so completely ploughed up, or covered with so thick a deposit of sludge, that not a trace of vegetation is visible. In parts, the watercourse is changed, by the choking up of its bed with stones and rubbish; and one spot, of about a quarter of a mile in length, immediately at the foot of the hill, is now occupied with many thousand tons of rock and stones, which were brought down by the torrent, and were arrested by a small plantation of trees which offered

the first impediment to their course. On reaching the summit of the hill, its great elevation becomes fully apparent; and I think it will not be difficult to account for the disruption of so large a quantity of bog, and for the enormous flood of water, which at once produced and accompanied its precipitation. The summit is nearly flat for a great extent, or has at most only sufficient inclination to carry off its surface water, which has found its passage into the valley, down the very steepest side of the mountain. The head of the brook, effecting this discharge of the water, did not run above half a mile along the moor, and its dimensions, according to the accounts I had received, did not exceed a yard in width, and about two feet in depth. It was impossible, therefore, that this channel could act as an efficient drain to so extensive a tract of moorland. The present appearance of this torrent bed is now exceedingly interesting, and exhibits an instance of the mighty effects which water in motion is capable of producing upon the crust of the earth. Its length upon the moor is now at least double that of its former course. Its width is several yards, and it has scooped out its bed to the depth of the bog, which varies in thickness from one yard to three. Being enabled to examine the bed of a secondary torrent which joined the main stream, I found that the peat or bog earth rests upon a stratum of compact blue clay, which appears to be completely impervious to water, as in no place could I perceive a single crevice or fault, or any discolouration of it by the bog water.

The torrent has worn its way down to the clay bottom, but it could not penetrate this stiff stratum. I may here remark, that but trifling disturbance of the bog has taken place where it rests on the sandstone, which, being of more uneven surface, presents to the peat a firmer and less slippery basis than the blue clay. It is evident that the vegetating peat is of less specific gravity than water, from the circumstance of its floating down with the stream in such large masses, after the torrent had reached a more even bed. I conceive, then, that the excessive quantity of rain which fell with such unusual violence on the moor, penetrated the bog to its very bottom, which was composed of the impenetrable blue clay. It is reasonable to suppose that the rain may have broken down and carried into the original brook fragments of peat sufficient to dam up its insignificant bed. In this case, the rain continuing to fall, and no sufficient outlet being open to carry it off, the waters would accumulate upon the moor until the resistance offered by the dam would yield to the pressure, and a sudden liberation of the flood would be effected. An immense moving force would thus be instantaneously exerted, and portions of bog, already buoyant almost to floatage, would give way to its impulse, and be carried down the stream. The continuity of the bog being thus destroyed and a drain opened, which by its depth put the adjacent parts under the action of a pressure, successive masses of peat would yield, and at the same time the stream would be increased by the addition of the black fluid contained between the hassocks or patches of the firmer peat. That the supposition of a waterspout is unnecessary, is clear from two successive repetitions of the eruption when no rain fell. The second slip occurred at nightfall on the 2nd September, unaccompanied by the roaring noise of the first eruption, which was probably occasioned not only by the deluge of water, but by the dislodgment and rolling down of so great a number of stones and rocks. The third eruption, which was very considerable, took place about nine o'clock on the morning of the 3rd September, and large masses of bog were brought down by the water. In the interval between the first and third eruption, I was informed that no rain had fallen. Of this last there were many eye-witnesses, whom curiosity had led upon the moor, and they describe the appearance to have been that of masses of bog, heaving slightly and by degrees, falling into the bed of the torrent, which had been formed by the first eruption, accompanied by a rush of water. This is to be accounted for from the great retentiveness of water which the moor possesses, and for which the trench opened by the first eruption had not proved a sufficient drain. Pools of water remained on the moor, which suddenly found a passage into the bed of the torrent under the peat, on the top of the blue clay, and by the water lumps of bog were swelled into the stream.

That a considerable drainage has taken place already in the immediate vicinity of the torrent-bed, is evident from the subsidence and cracked appearance of the bog in those parts. This subsidence extends some hundred yards beyond the head of the present watercourse. A very erroneous idea has been conveyed to me by the accounts I have happened to read of the phenomenon respecting the

amount of disrupted bog. From them I conceived that a certain patch or tract had been removed. This is not the case. A canal, or wide ditch, has been opened by the operation of the water, and the former contents of this channel are the portions of the moor carried away. The sides of this channel are very irregular, and difficult of access, from the quantities of soft boggy mud which remain deposited. The subsidence along the banks of this channel extends, in many parts, as much as twenty yards on each side of it; and, nearer to the precipice, the stream of mud had a width of fifty or sixty yards. A cart-road, formed of stones, which formerly traversed a part of the moor on the bank of the brook, is entirely washed away. I have mentioned that, on quitting the moor, the brook suddenly precipitates itself into the valley. This rapid descent is not perpendicular, but in a horizontal line of a quarter of a mile. I should estimate the fall at 400 feet. It was from this spot that the stones and rock were dislodged; and it is here that the most interesting results of the torrent are visible. Its bed of solid rock has in some parts been deepened from two to three feet; and in consequence of the opposition of sudden turns in the course, and of a frequent narrowing of the channel, the torrent assumed an undulating outline, like to the course of a round ball put in motion from the summit of a high hill, and possessing sufficient momentum to rise over minor eminences in its way to the bottom.

By this action, the water occasionally dashed over high points of rock or land, sweeping down such puny opponents as the stone dykes. The natural bed of the torrent is very deep along this precipitous descent, but narrow, as is common to such situations. The quantity of water suddenly let loose and rushing down it was too great to escape through the more confined parts of this channel, and it consequently rose over the banks, and, in some places, to the depth of thirty and forty feet. About two miles from the edge of the mountain it washed away part of a bridge, and I found that it had there attained a depth of fifteen feet. The Leeds dyers appear to have been seriously inconvenienced for a few days by the impurity of the water of the river Aire, into which the brook from Crow Hill falls at Keighley. It is estimated that by the course of these streams Leeds is thirty-five miles distant from the mountain. Shoals of fish were destroyed by the poisonous or suffocating nature of the water, which must have been too thick for the support of animal life. I have entered into this minute detail of the present state and appearance of the moor, in consequence of hearing that the Leeds people talked of putting a dam across the stream on the moor, with the view of preventing the recurrence of an event which has so troubled their waters. In my opinion, this would be the most certain method of reproducing it. Rather let the present channel be kept open; let it be widened but not deepened, and let numerous branch drains be cut into it. It must be expected that great quantities of muddy water, and even of bog itself, will come away in heavy rains, or after deep snows, in the course of the ensuing winter; but much might be done by a few men in the next month to diminish the evil, and no time should be lost in setting about it. The good people of Leeds, who, as I am informed, use the water of the Aire for household as well as for manufacturing and chemical purposes, will show their wisdom by giving some consideration to the subject. It is a matter also of no little importance to the numerous millowners on this mountain stream, to put a stop to these impetuous and filthy outbreaks.

The machinery of a cotton-mill above Stanbury appears to have sustained considerable damage by the unwelcome entrance of the water and sludge into the rooms. I am surprised that this factory withstood the shock of the waters, exposed as it was to their brunt.

THE STUDENT AT COLOGNE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "BATTLE CROSS," "ELLIE FORESTERE," &c.

In the year 17— the city of Cologne presented a different appearance to what it does now. Nevertheless, though it contained not so many wonderful things, more reverence was paid to what it then exhibited.

First, there was the magnificent cathedral of St. Peter, and within that edifice the tomb of the Three Wise Men of the East, or Kings of Cologne, as they were called. They were interred in a purple shrine spangled with gold, set upon a pedestal of brass in the midst of a square mausoleum, faced within and without with marble and jasper. There they still repose, as many who have seen them declare, stretched at full length in all the odour of sanctity, bedecked with crowns of gold and jewels. In the church of St. Ursula you might, for a very trifling sum, it was said, behold the bones of the eleven thousand Virgin Martyrs. Some of the heads of these revered ladies are preserved in cases of silver, some are covered with red embroidered stuffs, and some have caps of cloth of gold and velvet.

Besides these defunct virgins, Cologne boasts of the living canonesses of St. Ursula, who are all countesses, and who will show you the crown of thorns, and the vessel into which the water was converted into wine at Cana. The church of St. Geneva, however, defies all competition in respect to relics. It contains the heads of nine hundred Moorish cavaliers, all crowned with caps of scarlet, and adorned with pearls. No wonder, then, Cologne was an archbishop's see from time immemorial, and the head city in Christendom. These Moorish cavaliers, we are informed, served in the army of Constantine, before he was converted to the true faith, and were beheaded because they refused to sacrifice to idols.

The city of Cologne, however, in spite of its relics and spiritual riches, and its three hundred and sixty-five churches and chapels, and its great extent and antiquity, was but an ill-designed and awkwardly-built city. Its principal thoroughfares were narrow and confined, and so great was the intricacy of its streets, that its houses seemed to have first been jostled together by one earthquake, and to have become located after the confused scramble they made to escape from the effects of another. The private edifices were for the most part dark and ill-lighted, the windows being composed of small round bits of glass.

However, ill-paved streets, narrow houses, relics of saints, strict ecclesiastical dominion, and tall, narrow, and crowded dwellings, could not prevent the growth and impulses of nature; and as many a sweet flower blooms in shade and obscurity, so many a lovely and modest maiden drew breath within the walls of old Cologne.

But of all the beauties that inspired the hearts of the young bachelors, or attracted the attention of the priests, none equalled Lorinella von Hàlen. She was a proud beauty, too, and her dark blue eyes made no unconscious mischief when she upraised them at her devotions at St. Ursula, and glanced for a moment around her—only a moment!—then again, deep as ever in her duties! As she returned home from mass through the principal thoroughfare, though it was often thronged with

gallant cavaliers, she scarcely vouchsafed to the proudest of them more than a hasty glance. Nevertheless, she had already won the hearts of many to an ardent affection, and set others raving in a kind of despair, which vented itself in a thousand mad and eccentric modes—sometimes in seeming anger, sometimes pretended scorn—as every look and gesture, nay, even the fluttering of a feather in her hat, or the *negligée* of a stray ringlet beneath it, being criticised with the keenest spirit. In fact, nothing was talked of but Lorinella von Hàlen.

The church she frequented was always crowded. The officiating minister said it was his eloquence—the admirers of Lorinella declared it was her beauty, that was the source of attraction: so he got promoted, and she was stared at.

She had a great many eligible offers, and some ineligible ones. Counts and barons of the archbishopric, and even of the empire, were in the list of her suitors; and gentlemen with handsome mustachios and no titles at all, who came from Baden-Baden.

Her father, who was of good family, amused himself all day as an amateur mechanic, taking little watches to pieces, and making gun-barrels, and had no time to attend to Lorinella. However, being once much pressed by an importunate suitor as he was fitting up a smoke-jack, "he declared he would never interfere with his daughter's inclinations, if she would but leave him to his wheels and pinions." Lorinella heard this, and, smiling to herself, determined to remain her own mistress as long as possible, and to revenge her sex for the cruelties they had often endured from mankind.

Now it happened, that about this time there arrived at Cologne a certain dashing and daring young spirit from Berlin, who, for some mad prank or other played off upon the professors of his college, had been obliged to rusticate. Godfrey Rudel was as complete a specimen of the German Burschen as ever "came over the Rhine." The swagger, address, and nonchalance of his fraternity, suffered nothing in his person. He could smoke like a foundery chimney; and as for fighting, he had acquired the true turn of the right wrist to such a nicety, that he could write his name backwards with his broadsword on his opponent's face without trouble.

He was also lucky in being unencumbered with censorious uncles, or cross and nervous aunts; nay, he had not even a father alive to call him to account; that worthy functionary having lately died, leaving Godfrey all his possessions.

These were not very numerous, and his son, who hated delay, at once made a bargain with the family lawyer, and sold all his claims for a sum in ready money. This amount scarcely exceeded three hundred and six dollars. Godfrey, however, thought it an immense sum, so he determined to act with becoming spirit, and commenced his career at Cologne in a manner which should do no dishonour to the university at which he had graduated, or rather attempted so to do.

Accordingly, with hat, cloak, and sword of the newest fashion, he would lounge and saunter through all the places of general resort, and frequent the most notorious houses of public entertainment. As he drank against the thirstiest, quarrelled and fought with the most reckless, and revelled with all, his dollars began speedily to melt away. Now and then a sort of uneasy sensation came over him. He had reflections at times

respecting the fund whence he should derive a supply when his present resources were exhausted. However, he never thought very long on any particular subject, and whenever such ugly cares obtruded, he took an extra bottle of the best hock and a "topper" of "golden wasser."

As may naturally be supposed, the theatres, the gaming-houses, and various smoking and drinking-rooms occupied no inconsiderable portion of Rudel's attention. Occasionally, however, he went to the cathedral to hear the anthem, and often took his station near the porch of St. Ursula, with other companions, to observe the pretty citizens' daughters coming forth from their devotions.

During one of these inspections, he caught sight of the graceful form —nay, he had even a glance, a stray one of course, from the dark eyes of the beautiful Lorinella. He had no time to analyse that glance—it was indeed a sunny mystery of smiles—momentary, intoxicating, enigmatical, significantly full of a profundity of dazzling unmeaningness. He was struck at once—it floored him.

Godfrey could think of nothing else. Theatres, club-houses, nay, every place of public or private entertainment, charmed him no longer. Even the jokes and pleasantries of his friends became intolerable; and witticisms, which once appeared to contain the very essence of humour, seemed positively unbearable.

It was not long, of course, before he became thoroughly acquainted with the history of the charming young creature who had enchained him. There was nothing very consoling in it, certainly. However, in spite of her pride and disdain, he determined to win the prize. Accordingly, he became as devout as he was previously inattentive to his religious duties; never omitting any festival or fast in which he thought there was a chance of his seeing his beloved at the church of St. Ursula. Lorinella was very punctual, too, but on no occasion was she unattended by her maid, Clarschen.

In this artifical state of society it does not do to leave everything to chance. Nature herself, in spite of what poets say, "looks best with her hair combed." The Venus de Medicis would scarcely be tolerated in a ball-room without stays. Thus, beauty itself is heightened by attention to certain rules and formulas, and the adornment of the hair, the lips, and the eyes, is an especial science. Nay, we have known a smile of heavenly sweetness to have been inspired by a looking-glass, and an expression of unadorned simplicity to have been only acquired by the labour and assiduity of hours.

Thus, in the masterpieces of our great painters, when a lovely object is presented as the most prominent study, the background is zigzagged with lightning, and dark and stormy clouds. The *great* Lely was very fond of this, and court beauties who, on most occasions, would have fainted at the sight of a spider, sat smiling unconscious nothingness, or nursing pet lambs in silk and brocade, under some of the vilest weather which ever deformed the skies.

So it was with Lorinella von Hàlen: she was a great artist. She understood perfectly the doctrine of contrasts. All beauty and loveliness and taste herself, her chosen attendant was hideous and ugly.

The *lady* trod like an antelope on the heather, the *domestic* stumped up the church like a sowherd, with noise enough to awaken any one but the vergers.

Lorinella's eyes were as beautiful as two stars under a sable cloud—Clarschen's were like a goat's. Lorinella's lips, especially the upper one, would have thrown a small poet into convulsions, and have induced Phidias to destroy his Venus as exemplifying something beyond the sculptor's art. Clarschen's face exhibited a compound expression between Carib and monkey; and her upper lip was so long that it made game of her face, her nose having crept half-way up her forehead in alarm; her chin was like the knuckled fist of a prize-fighter; besides, she squinted a little, and sported copper-coloured hair.

Godfrey Rudel endeavoured unceasingly to attract the attention of Lorinella: rarely, however, did she bestow a glance upon him, and even then it only increased the pangs he felt, since he found, in spite of all his assiduity and attention, he was as far off as ever from his object. Often did he drop the sweetest nosegays in her path, and scatter in her way flowers bound with little scraps of parchment, containing verses in praise of her divinity, and expressive of his own misery.

Lorinella heeded them not, and trod them beneath her feet as though they were but the spontaneous herbage of the roadway which sprang up to greet her.

Perseverance, however, will subdue the greatest difficulties, and great was Godfrey's delight one Sunday morning when he beheld Lorinella and Clarschen enter the cathedral, the latter carrying in her hands for her mistress one of his precious nosegays, around which he had twined a most heart-controlling epistle. Looking earnestly towards that part of the church which the young beauty and her attendant occupied, he was rewarded, towards the conclusion of the service, by a glance and a smile—such a smile!—not from Lorinella, indeed, but one by proxy, from her handmaid.

This circumstance, he felt assured, was of happy augury; he had gained the confidence of his mistress's companion. She would be sure to present her with the flowers, and then!—his verses would effect the rest! He was intoxicated with hope; so he went home, and, as he had lived upon very little else but love during the last fortnight, he made a night of it, and became intoxicated with Schiedam.

On the Friday following he again saw Lorinella and her abigail at St. Ursula's. He sought in vain during the service to obtain a glance from the mistress; however, he was rewarded by a most friendly recognition from the maid. He scattered, indeed, his nosegays about him to no purpose, and, almost in despair, was about to return to his lodgings, when all at once he beheld Clarschen approaching him. He was delighted with this mark of attention, and still more so, when he was addressed in terms which came at once to the subject of his love and devotion to Lorinella. Clarschen, however, informed him, that though his attentions and constancy were highly commended, he had as yet made no serious impression upon her mistress's heart; still, as a friend, she advised him to persevere, declaring that a few trinkets and jewels bestowed by way of presents, were far more lasting acknowledgments of love and attachment than frail and fading flowers, or scraps of verses, however high-flown and beautiful. Godfrey was not slow in taking this hint, and, after a long conversation with Clarschen, who was no ways willing to shorten their conference, he begged her to accompany him to a jeweller's shop, and assist his choice in selecting some handsome ear-rings and necklaces for

Lorinella. Clarschen seemed quite alive to this business, addressing the jeweller with the utmost familiarity, bidding him, with perfect confidence, display all his most costly articles. Not a few of these she compelled Godfrey to purchase; so that the unfortunate student, after paying away nearly all his ready money, was glad at last to escape without exposing his poverty.

The lady's maid then hastened homewards, promising Godfrey to exercise her best services with her mistress, and to obtain from her the acceptance of his gifts. She could not part, however, without giving him a most affectionate squeeze of the hand, and offering him her cheek for a caress—a ceremony which, after some hesitation, he felt himself bound by the laws of gallantry to perform. Some days elapsed before Lorinella was again visible. At length he met her returning from mass. There were two or three cavaliers in her company. She was laughing gently at their remarks, when, raising her dark and beautiful eyes, smiling with the sunniest mirth that ever lit the orbs of woman, she encountered the enraptured glance of Godfrey, who, planted close to a pil'ar in the aisle of the cathedral, with a most romantic air, cap in hand, was intently watching all her movements. Lorinella instantly withdrew her eyes, accompanied with an expression of scorn not to be misunderstood. The student was thunderstruck; he had neither power nor courage to follow her. One circumstance, however, increased his perplexity: he felt assured that one of his diamond ear-rings glittered against her swanlike neck, and as she drew off her glove to adjust a rebellious ringlet, after she had passed him, he felt certain that his emerald ring sparkled on her finger. Immediately afterwards she was lost in the crowd.

The disconsolate lover saw no more of her that day. He stood musing for some time upon his desperate fortunes, when suddenly he felt himself pulled by the sleeve, and, looking round, beheld the significant and expressive eyes of Clarschen fixed upon him.

"Courage, most gallant cavalier!" she exclaimed. "You perceive the lady has accepted your presents!"

"Yes; and treated their donor like a dog."

"Her pet poodle! ah, ha! All pretence—just a little wilfulness to show her power. Despair never yet won fair lady. 'Tis your own fault, man."

"How?" exclaimed Godfrey.

"How!—why look at her dark eyes; they did but chide your coldness, and while other lovers are serenading their mistresses from night till morn, she has never heard the sound of a flute or lutestring from Godfrey Rudel."

"Is that it?"

"Yes, you great calf."

"I will come this very night," exclaimed the student.

"Do so," rejoined Clarschen. "In the street of the 'Three Kings,' under the green-latticed balcony, at twelve, and I will warrant, if you sing as becomes a lover and a gallant cavalier, you shall not want for auditors."

Godfrey was transported; he thrust into Clarschen's nowise unwilling grasp a couple of florins. She still lingered—the embrace—yes, that was it. "Bah!" said Godfrey, when she had departed.

It is an old, old custom that of making love and waking music beneath

the stars; and from all time there have been gentle voices, ay, and gentle hearts too, that have responded to it. What joy, what fear, under the silence of those midnight skies ere the first fond note be broken! Eyes dark or blue, and a soft cheek, all the softer from the roseate tinge of excitement, as yet unseen or dimly marked in the shadows, things to be dreamed of or raved after; and then, too, like a stray star from the heaven of his love, a flower—a nosegay, dropped at the singer's feet! The lattice clicks; the curtain falls; all again is gloomy and silent—all, save the passionate hearts of the lovers. And now at last they part, he seeking his home, to rest as well he may, while she retires to repose in a delicious dream till morning.

Part II.

Godfrey Rudel, though not much of a musician, repaired to the spot at the hour appointed. He had a tolerable voice, and an excellent memory, and a ready knack at extemporising; so he contrived to commence his serenade with spirit.

For some time he sung apparently in vain. At length a window opened, and he beheld a head covered with a tall peaked red cap. At first he was somewhat alarmed lest he had aroused the lady's father, or perhaps disenchanted the spirit of her great-grandmother, for the apparition had a strange appearance. As he played on, his confidence returned. He approached the window; he addressed some soft words to the red nightcap; it nodded in recognition; and Godfrey, becoming quite enchanted, breathed all manner of soft and endearing epithets. Suddenly he heard a burst of laughter, the window slammed, and he found himself in the hands of the watch. Alas! it was not under the clear and balmy skies of Spain or Italy that he had made his avowal of an honourable love—no, indeed; but in a city where the police are ever on the alert, by an excessive zeal to prove their diligence, and assert their incapacity by allowing real delinquents to escape, and harmless fellows, like our serenader, to be entrapped.

Godfrey was obliged to submit to some hours' confinement; but, as nothing very serious could be urged against him, he was set at large after paying a heavy fine, and having to mourn the loss of his guitar, which he was told had been dashed to pieces in the tumult, though he was not aware he had made so desperate a resistance.

Indignant and humiliated, he remained long away from his accustomed haunts; until, one day meeting Clarschen, she accosted him in so affectionate a manner, and expressed to him the grief of her mistress at his capture, after a method so warm and consoling, that he felt his courage renewed to undergo the greatest trials.

Still he could not refrain from expressing his impatience at the unsatisfactory progress of his suit; the more so, as he had accidentally met Lorinella the second morning after his serenade, and she had passed him as though he were the most unmusical genius in the world.

"You are a wayward fellow, indeed!" exclaimed Clarschen; "you may be very well skilled in geometry, but you cannot measure the depths of a woman's feelings—gentle, suffering, devoted woman," continued Clarschen, playing a tattoo upon the top of a post which stood by the roadway. "Woman! the unoffending victim of her affections; woman! the meek,

the enduring! On my life she loves you! ay, better than her little finger—"

"Indeed," said Godfrey.

"Ay, indeed! most learned cavalier."

"She has a peculiar way of showing it."

"Peculiar? how unkind! so have we all. She is a beauty, and has been a spoilt child; depend on it, she only wants a fitting opportunity of reciprocating your affection."

"Would I thought so!"

"Persevere, and we shall see a happy conclusion."

"*We*, indeed," muttered Godfrey; however, he felt comforted at this, and, in spite of her ugliness, could not but consider Clarschen as a very sensible person. Nevertheless, he continued obstinate, and expressed his full determination to have some better proofs of his mistress's good wishes than seeing her at midnight nod to him from a window in a red nightcap. "A few words from herself in reply to my numerous sonnets?" he muttered, "or at least a moment's private conversation?"

"You shall have both," said Clarschen, confidently; "depend upon me for a *billet-doux*, and as for a *tête-à-tête*, never trust me more if I don't bring you together to-morrow at the cathedral; only you must go and station yourself in the choir before it is lighted up. Lorinella shall come to the same form as if by mistake or inadvertence, and there, beneath the fourth pillar of the south transept, you will both have an opportunity of saying a thousand delightful things."

Godfrey was so overjoyed at this proposal, that he dismissed Clarschen with a double fee—an oblation pleasant enough when the recipient is a pretty woman, but rather a work of supererogation in the present instance. All that night the poor student could dream of nothing else but Lorinella's dark eyes, and the felicity of squeezing her hand and breathing his vows in a whisper, lest he should disturb the service.

Morning came, and, after breakfast, Godfrey took a long, lonely walk into the country to pass the time away until the evening. When he returned he partook of a hasty meal, and commenced the labours of his toilet, selecting the most splendid suit in his wardrobe, affixing a fresh heron's plume to his cap, and a new cord and button of bullion to his cloak.

In truth, he cut a gallant figure, only he wore his cap too much on one side, which gave him rather a rakish appearance for one so desperately in love. Slowly at length he took his way to the cathedral, and had the gratification of finding that he had arrived in good time, as the vergers had hardly adjusted the different seats; so, loitering about for half an hour in the dusk, he endeavoured to read the epitaphs, and took a look at the stone monuments. At length, a tribe of poor school children flocking into the edifice, he became horrified lest they should pre-occupy his chosen seat beside the fourth pillar, to which he accordingly repaired with all diligence.

The church now filled apace. What a watchful man was our student; he noted every cloak and shawl that showed itself at the chief entrance or the side porch; marking with a beating heart the progress of every cap and bonnet through the throng in hopes that it would at least nestle beside him; at length he beheld something very dark and shadowy approaching him. Surely it was a woman's sainted form? He was not

mistaken; it must be; it could be no other than the beloved Lorinella herself! Now she looks round in bewilderment, as in search of him; ah! now she sees him; she rushes forward; she is by his side!

Then, whether prompted by the sanctity of the place, the gloom of the niche, or by her great and uncontrollable love, she yielded her hand to his caresses.

Again and again Godfrey pressed her to his heart, when, at this auspicious moment, at some particular part of the service, every lamp and candlestick blazed with light; an immense jet of flame being thrown on the particular spot in which Godfrey and his beloved sat enshrined.

The student turned with rapture to gaze upon the dark, fond eyes of his Lorinella, but what was his horror, when he beheld Clarschen clasped in his arms, and languishing beneath the weight of her affections.

Scarcely twenty paces off, surrounded by a bevy of the gallant cavaliers of Cologne, sat Lorinella von Hàlen, her beautiful dark eyes absolutely raining on him a mixed shower of scorn and sunbeams.

The companions, too, by whom she was attended, made no effort to repress their mirth and astonishment.

Wonder we then that poor Godfrey became mad, furious; that he would have dashed Clarschen from him if he could, and have rushed from the cathedral. However, the crowded state of the edifice, and the impressiveness of the service, for the moment, restrained him. As for Clarschen, the more indignant he appeared, the more she endeavoured to console him with her caresses. He writhed and stamped: one minute he shook his hand in the air like a madman, the next he sought to shelter himself behind the column. In vain; she held him to the bench; nor did his misery or his confusion end here. By chance, Godfrey had seated himself in that portion of the church devoted to ladies, who, after a certain domestic event, repair to the edifice to return thanks for their restoration to health. Now, it happened that the officiating priest had been informed that two females of the suburbs, who had recently blessed their lords with twins, would repair that evening to the churching-bench to receive his benediction. Unluckily, the worthy man was very short-sighted, and looking round upon that part of the edifice, and seeing two persons extremely intimate with each other, he called the special attention of the audience to Godfrey and Clarschen, and forthwith commenced to church them "for the wonderful increase of healthy children with which they had blessed the Christian community."

Every eye of course turned towards the fortunate couple—nay, a confusion of suppressed but unwonted sounds filled the choir. Lorinella actually stood up among her companions, that she might have the better view!

This was too much; one stroke more than Godfrey could endure. He sprang from the form—gave himself a furious blow on the forehead, no one knew why, unless it was because Clarschen persisted in clinging to his legs; at length, however, with a desperate bound, he extricated himself, and overturning half-a-dozen benches in his way, rushed like a madman from the cathedral.

He stayed not until he had reached his lodging, in a distant part of the city.

He rushed up-stairs like a thunderbolt, absolutely overturning the landlady, who was steadying herself very carefully with one hand, while with

the other she was carrying up a dish of soup for an old invalid gentleman on the third floor.

Godfrey threw himself into his chamber, locked, bolted, and barricaded the door, jumped into bed, and heaping the clothes over his head, and stuffing his fingers into his ears, endeavoured to shut out the echoes of the shouts and laughter still ringing around him.

Here he lay for some time. In vain his landlady implored admission —for she believed him to be mad. He was deaf to her entreaties; she went down to the street-door to look out for her husband to send him for the doctor.

Scarcely, however, had she opened it, before Clarschen herself appeared. She had completed her devotions, and had hurried to the poor student. "She guessed how things were," she said, "and came to offer her services."

"Ah, thank you, that is a dear creature!" sobbed the good landlady. "He is sure to open the door when he hears your voice."

"Yes; but I must speak in my artificial tones," said the lady's maid, "or it will be too much for his nerves."

She then proceeded up-stairs, and addressed Godfrey through the key-hole, in the voice and manner of the worthy abbé who had preached at St. Ursula's.

The student, who had removed the clothes off his head in order to breathe a little more freely, hearing the sing-song voice of the preacher, conceived that the whole congregation were at his heels, and that the churching ceremony was about to re-commence; a vague idea of throwing himself out of the window presented itself. However, with a bewildered air, he sat up in bed, and as he had a few arrangements to make previous to quitting the world, he commenced inditing his will; and endeavoured to write a line to Lorinella, finding it impossible to die without undeceiving her as to the object of his attachment.

During this time, his landlady, Clarschen, the old sick lodger, and all the other lodgers, a great many of the neighbours, and half the idle people out of the street, began to grow impatient at neither obtaining an answer to their queries, nor ingress into Godfrey's chamber.

Clarschen now represented to all present her own delicate position as regarded the student, and her undoubted influence over him, and satisfactorily proved to the assembled friends that Godfrey's conduct was owing to his self-reproach at having quarrelled with her in a fit of jealousy at church, and requested them forthwith to break open the door, that she might go in and put everything to rights. This was accordingly done in spite of the barricade, and the whole assembly, so impatient were they to witness the *dénouement* of the affair, rushed in, or rather tumbled in, before Godfrey had time to sign his will or get the window open.

Great, indeed, was his horror at seeing Clarschen at the head of the invaders. However, she did not allow him much respite; for in a somewhat imperative manner, dismissing the party under the plea that she would bring him round in a few minutes, she began, after shedding a deluge of tears, to inveigh against his cruelty, and to proclaim her devoted constancy.

"Her devoted constancy!" thought Godfrey. If previously astonished at the progress of events, he was scarcely prepared for this avowal.

"I have loved you long, and deeply," said Clarschen, between her sobs; "but your ingratitude will be my destruction."

"Loved me?" said Godfrey, sitting upright in bed; "surely you must be raving. Were not all my protestations addressed to your mistress? and had I not hopes from your own confession that they were not unfavourably received? Did she not even condescend to wear my presents?"

"She bought them of me," sobbed the lady's maid.

"Bought them!" shouted the student, in a tone perfectly electrifying.

"Yes—yes; she considered you as my lover."

"Lorinella consider me as your lover?" cried Godfrey, springing out of bed, and frantically looking at the glass, then at his razors, then at Clarschen, then at the window, then again at his razors, one of which he eagerly began to strop. At length, his words found renewed utterance, as he exclaimed, "Why, what on earth!—what witchcraft or delusion could have been practised on her?"

"None, none!" said Clarschen; "but as she thought the jewels were above my station, she kindly purchased them of me, that I might make suitable preparations for our union."

"And the serenade?" said the student, with the calmness of desperation.

"Was addressed to me. My mistress was present, however, though she stood behind a curtain, as she could not believe you could be so devoted."

"Confusion!" said Godfrey, striking his forehead. "I was devoted! So then she considered we met by special appointment at the cathedral?"

"Certainly," replied Clarschen, brightening up and drying her tears. "Indeed, I assure you, she and all the good people of Cologne commended your attention, and considered you as the most devoted of admirers, and had it not been for that unlucky affair in getting on the wrong bench—"

"Ay," said the student, almost choking, "that *was* unlucky."

"But what matters it," responded the domestic, "if we love one another?"

"Oh, certainly not much; only we were churched a little too soon."

"Yes; that is all;" and as for the abbé, we can make up to him the loss of his fees by allowing him to marry us."

"Just so," said Godfrey, with calm desperation; "that is exactly my way of thinking."

At this moment the landlady, who, with a dozen neighbours had been eagerly listening at the door, looked in, and gave Clarschen a very significant smile, which was as much as to say, "Ah, my dear, I see you know how to manage the men."

The latter replied by a look equally complacent.

Godfrey, who all the while had been walking up and down the apartment, now said in a low voice, which slightly trembled, but with the emphasis of a man who had taken some determined resolution—

"My dear Clarschen, I suppose all the world, after what has occurred, deem it imperative that our union take place, and are anxiously looking forward to the event, naturally concluding, that, as our courtship has afforded them so much interest, our marriage ought to claim on their part no less attention?"

"Certainly; the city talks of nothing else."

"I thought so. Well, and when do you propose that the ceremony shall take place?"

"With as little delay as possible," she replied. "It cannot be too soon after what has occurred."

"You are right—after what has occurred! Will to-morrow morning be soon enough for you?"

"Yes; to-morrow morning. I shall be ready."

"And you will leave me, *now*?" said Godfrey, entreatingly. "I have a few arrangements to make."

"Certainly; yet one embrace, Godfrey, my beloved."

"Faugh!" cried the student, turning away; "we shall have plenty of that for years to come."

"Ay; I forgot that." And Clarschen, after bestowing upon him a most languishing look, at last took her departure. Scarcely had she been gone ten minutes before the landlady tapped at the door.

"Come in," said Godfrey.

The worthy woman, curtsying as she entered, said, "that having heard of his approaching marriage from her niece, who had just been informed of it in the market-place, she thought she could do no otherwise than wish him joy, and beg his acceptance of a small roasting pig, as a present for the wedding dinner."

"Thank you," said Godfrey. "Have the goodness to put the little pig down on that chair."

Still the good creature lingered, no doubt thinking that the pig was worth an invitation to the wedding feast. At length the student, divining her thoughts, told her "that Clarschen and himself would be happy if she would join a few select friends on the morrow to celebrate the auspicious event."

This she joyfully accepted, and having occasion to go a-visiting that evening, she spread the news far and wide among her friends.

Before his accustomed hour of repose, Godfrey had received six other small roasting pigs and a leg of mutton from friends and acquaintances of the landlady. The pigs were duly placed on the chairs in his apartment, and their donors complimented with invitations to the wedding repast.

Two hours after midnight, when the moon had gone down, and the whole city was wrapped in gloom and darkness, save from an occasional lamp which shed its flickering and uncertain rays over the narrow and ill-paved streets, the glare of some light from the shipping by the quays, or from the fishing-boats on the bosom of the broad deep Rhine, the student at Cologne, after packing up his few books in one bundle, and his scanty wardrobe in another, and suspending both upon a stick, quietly descended the stairs, and let himself out at the front door.

He left a note for his landlady, bequeathing her the seven small roasting pigs and the leg of mutton for any arrears of lodging for which he might be indebted.

He departed from Cologne with the value of about fifty florins in his possession. Never was Godfrey Rudel again heard of.

Some sensation was at first produced by his sudden disappearance. It lasted exactly nine days, and then all was forgotten, though Clarschen

took care to spread pretty extensively the story of her woes and her desertion.

Some years later, Germany was entranced by the eloquence and learning of a professor at Gottingen, who, rising from the lowest benches by his industry and ability, attained one of the most honourable and lucrative appointments in the university.

He might have had no connexion with our student; certainly he bore a widely different name. One thing, however, was remarkable: the professor had a violent prejudice against the good city of Cologne; besides this, he suffered from a nervous affection of a most peculiar nature. He lost all his presence of mind and resolution at the sight of a petticoat; nay, this apparition almost threw him into convulsions, and his best friends, whenever he moved out of his college, which was only on rare occasions, kindly endeavoured to keep out of his sight all the human creatures who have an hereditary claim to that garment.

However, this is no certain proof of the professor's identity with Godfrey Rudel, many other worthy men being subject to the same infirmity.

THE PHILOSOPHER OF THE YEAR 1949; OR, A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE.

THERE lived a great philosopher, in nineteen forty-nine,
Who, 'neath the Muses' tender feet, began to spring a mine;
And while he laboured hard, still he gloried in his strength,
And as he smiled in triumph, thus his verses flowed at length.

Spirit of Anti-Wisdom, hail! I pray thee be my muse;
Feed, feed my incapacity, while knowledge I abuse;
Thus saith the proverb—and what man its truthfulness denies—
"Where ignorance is real bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

Intelligence! retire, or I will hurl a barbëd dart
Of bitterest invective to pierce thy inmost heart.
Talk not to me of England, Denmark, Germany, and France;
Biography is—fiddlestick, and history, romance.

Come round me, all ye doubters, and soon we will see, whether
There's one thing we'll believe, if we can but hold together.
Hume doubted if he lived, and then he doubted if he doubted;
But though they fought him hard, he ne'er confessed that he was routed.

We don't believe in Homer. He never lived—not he;
And his epics and heroics may all be burned for me.
We don't believe in Homer; and if there were a person
Who'd venture to avow it, we would not believe Macpherson.

Bold Niebhur was the hero; he was well armed cap-à-pie,
And he set off with a blazing weapon, called a Theory;
And Romulus and Livy he twirled over with his thumb;
Old Cures he pulled down, and in its stead built Quirium.

Horatius tried to keep the bridge, but could not hold out long,
So he hit him with his Theory, and sold him for a song;
But the patent for his Theory he quite forgot to keep,
And many now make theories, and sell them very cheap.

Down with all history, I say. Ah! if I had the lead
I'd set up schools and colleges to *un*learn how to read.
The time, though not arrived, yet is coming on apace,
When with truth it shall be said, we're not a book-believing race.

They say that Louis Philippe reigned in eighteen forty-eight;
He could not gain his people's love, but won his people's hate;
He bade his driver, Guizot, hold in tight the gallant French,
And the minister pulled lustily, and gave a tearing wrench.

The people kicked and reared, and quickly broke the tightened rein,
And Guizot tottered in his seat, and rolled upon the plain;
And Barrot tried to hold them in, but 'twas no use to try,
So, like a man, he gave it up, and joined the rebel cry.

And Louis bade his soldiers fight, like brave men, unto death,
But they thought that they'd had fun enough, and so they saved their breath.
He didn't know his people were so very ultra-Whig—
"He never dreamt, when he set out, of running such a rig."

Away went Louis, who but he! and thought he heard the sound
Of rebels and of banquets, till he trod on British ground;
And the French set up a government, till its knell also rang,
And after Louis Philippe soon they sent off Louis Blanc.

But as for crediting all this—no, no, no, no, not I;
We all agree that history and stuff is—all my eye.
Why all these things took place at least a hundred years ago;
And who can tell what happened then, that I should like to know.

They say the Pope was driven out in a gaudy footman's dress,
And after that the Romans got into a precious mess;
For the merry men of France sent for their fiery troops, in hope
That, as they had put down a king, they might set up a pope.

And Oudinot marched over with five thousand gallant men,
And, when he just had entered Rome, was driven out again;
For Garibaldi armed his mob, and bade them fight it out;
And so they did, and all the French sent to the right about.

And then the tables turned. The French, they marched in triumph in,
And Garibaldi, he marched out, and didn't care a pin.
But, after all, his Holiness would trust to neither side,
And at Gaeta, if they'd let him, he resolv'd his head to hide.

And the Emperor of Austria in fright resigned his crown,
For Vienna had ris'n up in arms, and fairly knocked him down;
And Hungary was in revolt, and Lombardy at war,
And his poor old eyes were wearied quite with looking out so far.

Radetski southward went, to give th' Italians a flick;
And Schlick, and Wendel, Windischgratz, and Baron Jellachich
Went out to fight the crack-jaw names of Kossuth and Dembinski,
For as for Bem, for euphony, he dropped his Polish inski.

And so the storm in Europe raged, till Nicholas must try,
With a quiet Turkey look, to put his finger in the pie;
And fifty thousand oily-looking Russians drew the sword,
Commanded by a man whose name's a terribly hard word.

It's really hard to wade along, and tell you which is which,
Debreczin, Ostensachen, Szegedin, and Paskiewitch;
They're all such scraggy, craggy, Magy-ar-like looking places,
I give it up, and will not try to clear up names and places.

But Grotenjehm, Sabrauski, Lewartowski, and their murky
Oily soldiers sent the inskis off, with dusty feet, to Turkey;
So Bem, and Dem, and all of them, "hid their diminished heads,
Though Nicholas he would not leave them quiet in their beds."

His affection was so great for them, that off he sent a civil,
Complimentary, kind message to the Sultan, by Radzivil:
"Czar Nicholas' regards to the Sultan, and would be
Obliged if he would send to him each Polish refugee.

"A spacious gibbet is prepared, and from it any number
Of Poles may be suspended, as good-for-nothing lumber."
The Sultan felt his poor heart beat, and loudly took to banging
At his chest, and then the floor, and said, "Send in Sir Stratford Canning."

And his Excellency came, and said, "O, Sultan, live for ever!
Let me humbly beg your Highness not to fall into a fever;
The Czar begins to bark, but do not fear that he will bite,
So arm your troops, and fire away—there'll never be a fight."

"That will I," said the Sultan. "Ho! bid the troops to gripe
Their cutlasses most fiercely, and let each man light his pipe,
And into fighting order his mustachios let him stroke;"
And so they did, and this big talking ended all in smoke.

Oh, dear! what tales they did invent in those book-reading days;
We'll make bonfire of them all, and what a pile we'll raise;
Pile Hume and Smollett up, and then apply a patent burner,
Scott, Lingard, Gibbon, Robertson, and Coxe, and Sharon Turner.

Come, Burnet, Tytler, D'Aubigne, Adolphus, and Dalrymple;
Come, Watson, Mackintosh, we'll show you history made simple;
Come, Alison, Mahon, Macaulay, Prescott, come, the Yankee,
Thiers, Thierry, Schiller, Menzel, Mills, Professor Ranké.

Come, old Herodotus, and bring the nine along with you;
Drag that great book, Thucydides, your Greek will never do;
Come, Livy, come, Polybius, and Tacitus, my men,
And tell those fellows after you to quicken, if they can.

"Heap on more wood, the wind is chill; but, whistle as it will,"
We'll have a bonfire long enough to reach to Christmas still.
There, blaze away! O, History! how very small you look,
For nothing will we leave you—no, not a single book.

While thus our great philosopher had watched the blazing pile,
He sat him down before the flames to rest himself awhile.
"Thus History is gone," said he; "her glories all are o'er,
And she and her eight hundred books shall bother us no more."

Then from his coat a book he drew, unfolded a long tree,
And so feelingly he simpered as he read his pedigree.
Yet a little something seemed to say, "Come, throw it on the fagot."
But he said, winking his eyes, "Don't you wish that you may get it."

"Let every one take care," said he—"take great care what they read,
And noxious books, as history, uproot each for a weed.
Improper books they often are, and waste of time, at best;
Believe your genealogies, and bonfire all the rest."

RECREATION ON SUNDAYS.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

THERE can be no doubt but that the feeling excited at the witnessing, on a Sunday, a monster-train or a loaded steam-boat, is not at the moment of a gratifying nature. One is certainly moved to exclaim, "What a desecration of the Sabbath!" Of course the facilities offered to pleasure-seekers on the Sunday, by railway and steam-boat companies, have a tendency to thin, more or less, our churches and chapels, and occasion a great deal of what is not strictly indispensable labour. There is no question of that fact, and it is better at once to state it boldly and look it calmly in the face. Afterward, however, let us, with equal fairness, examine the other facts in connexion with the subject, pointing in a different direction; and form, upon the whole, a rational and dispassionate judgment.

This is precisely what no one does. There are two great parties in the matter of the observance of the Sabbath. One party, headed by Mr. Hume, and numbering in its ranks sundry individuals, whose opinions generally coincide with his on other questions, would really seem to be desirous to do away with all outward distinction between Sunday and another day. We are no admirers of Mr. Joseph Hume, and we differ with him much on this as on nearly all other subjects. On the other hand, we have Mr. Spooner and Mr. Plumptre, who would, we believe, go most extraordinary lengths the opposite way, stopping trains, steam-boats, coaches, shutting up this place and that place, and producing an immensity of inconvenience and discomfort. The fact is, that too often when antagonistic views arise on any point, the difference increases gradually. Men who have become identified with certain opinions feel a pleasure in confronting and thwarting men who are identified with the opposite opinions; and by and by the judgment, the calm, cool judgment is so interfered with by this party-feeling, that it flings up its office in despair, and the conflict is no longer that of one set of well-weighed conclusions against another set of well-weighed conclusions, to be conducted with all gravity and solemnity, with a fervent desire not to gain a triumph, but to arrive at TRUTH; but is degraded into an undignified party-struggle, in the heat of which the original difference becomes so marvellously widened, that the contrast between what each combatant now argues, and what he argued at the outset, is almost, if not quite, as decided as was at such outset the difference between him and his antagonist.

We have no doubt that Mr. Joseph Hume glories in witnessing the effect produced on Mr. Plumptre by his proposing that the National Gallery shall be open on Sundays; and I am sure that neither Mr. Plumptre nor Mr. Spooner would exhibit half the energy they display at Exeter Hall, if they did not mentally witness the irritation occasioned their old enemy by a perusal of their addresses (interrupted, as they would appear to have been, at every tenth word by "loud cheers") in next day's newspaper.

However, to proceed with our subject. Now, it is undoubtedly laid down in Holy Writ that we are to "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and that our occupations on that day are to be of a decidedly pious and devotional character. Such being the case, is there not a strong call for everybody to attend divine worship, and partake to the full of the benefits offered by public adoration? Before replying to this, let us briefly bring to mind the circumstance of our Saviour distinctly intimating, on one occasion, that it was "lawful to do well on the Sabbath-day."

Not now to enter into a lengthened quotation of the additional remarks uttered on the occasion alluded to, we would remind the reader, that the clear tenor of our Saviour's observations was, that in cases of emergency those things might be done on the Sabbath-day, which, viewed in the abstract, would be altogether sinful and ungodly. Here, then, was opened a field for discretion. This thing which under the standing-law relating to the Sabbath I may *not* do, I *may* do if there be for it absolute requirement—a necessity which cannot be put aside. We desire to bring this argument to bear on all questions relating to the Sabbath. We lay great stress on the fact of its thus being lawful to exercise a certain discretion as to the employment of the Sabbath-day. In various ways, the due observance of the Sabbath is now interfered with. It is bad; that such is the case, is to be regretted; and if a change can wisely be effected, it should be made. But it may not be wisely effected; in other words, it may be, that, with the desired cessation of labour, would spring up an infinite amount of ill; and the throwing away the boon purchased with lawful money—that is, the good effected through the toil legalised and justified by the declaration above quoted—would, perhaps, entail an uprising of evil deeply to be deplored. We are not to consider, in reference to the observation of the Sabbath, that there has been imposed upon us a law from which we may not in the slightest degree deviate. The very lawgiver himself sanctioned and allowed—nay, enjoined—a deviation, under a peculiarity of circumstances; and striking as is the fact, it is nevertheless certain, that there might be a case where an apparently glaring desecration of the Sabbath would (if the expression be allowable) win from Deity a smile of approval, while a faithful observance of it under the standing-law would assuredly be regarded with a frown of displeasure.

Now, placing ourselves in the position of directors of railways or steamboats, let us consider whether, in voting for offering facilities for pleasure-seekers on Sundays, we can conscientiously say that our aim is to do good. Yes, we *can* say so—if it be a good thing to give opportunity to the over-tasked labourer or mechanic, whose life is a life of toil—unremitting, enduring toil, involving, it may be, a premature grave, to leave, one day in the week, at least, the scene of his labour, and go forth to inhale the pure air, and to bask in the bright sun, with a glorious feeling of perfect freedom. Look at the courts and alleys of our great city. You shudder as you pass through them. Try to imagine remaining in them a day, and you will recoil at the thought. Yet their occupants remain in them weeks, months, years,—in winter and in summer, in fair weather and in foul, in healthy seasons and in sickly. And more than this, those occupants, while probably poorly-fed and scantily-clad, are all of them engaged in hard labour—labour, too, oftentimes of an injurious character, affecting both physical and mental well-being. The lives of these poor people are shortened—it cannot be otherwise—and yet there is no remedy; we cannot make all the poor rich—we cannot make the getting bread invariably an easy matter—we cannot render every occupation innoxious and unobjectionable. But if—by placing it within the reach of these poor people, the going forth each seventh-day from their confined and unhealthy localities, to bright spots far away from London's smoke and filth, where the fresh, untainted air will cool their feverish brows—where the beauteous landscape will bring back lustre to their

clouded eyes—where the glorious sun, fully beheld and luxuriantly revelled in, and the soft blue sky, contemplated in its bewildering and thrilling expanse, will restore their energies and revive their spirits,—if in this way it be within our power to diminish misery and promote comfort, to battle with disease and to court health, to instil hope where there would otherwise be despair, to excite cheerfulness where there would be unmitigated gloom,—then we say, aye, although this cannot be done without the turning the Sabbath-day to other account than that to which those more happily-circumstanced should undoubtedly have regard; yet that, as by the giving the facilities mentioned we shall be actually "doing well," such a course on our part may most conscientiously be adopted.

But let us view this matter in another light.

Now, we never feel so religiously inclined as when we are rambling in the country on a fine summer's day. There is something emphatically calming and soothing, something that sets itself most powerfully in antagonism with turbulent and unworthy thoughts, in the aspect of Nature, at the seasons when she wears her loveliest garb. Who can, unmoved, gaze at the waving trees and verdant pastures, and indifferently contemplate the bright blue heavens? Who, when so occupied, has not felt there to rise up involuntarily within his bosom, a rich sense of benefits bestowed by an almighty hand, of continued loving-kindness exhibited by a never-sleeping and beneficent Creator? Whatever changes may be witnessed, the seasons come again in due course; whatever dark iniquity may be perpetrated—however low may, at the time, be the standard of morals, and however scant the religion, the sun shines on as of old, and the mighty progress of revivification is once more everywhere manifest. And as the gaze is involuntarily directed upward, and becomes fixed on the glorious canopy above, hardened indeed must be the heart unstirred by a healthy emotion of mingled awe and veneration. And greatly will that emotion be increased if, as the eye wonderingly scans the magnificent arch, and the mind, as it were, rolls over the unspeakable mystery of what lies beyond, and which may not be seen, there should rise up (as will probably be the case), with perfectly overwhelming force, the recollection that there are those to whom that mystery has long been revealed, and who are at this moment inhabitants of "the land which lies beyond the grave." These are not strangers, but dear relatives and friends—the father and the mother, the brother, mayhap, and the sister, the wife and the child. The blue heavens, their imagined home, have awakened thoughts of these; and as they all pass in review before the mental eye, each seems, with outstretched finger, to point to their present lofty abode. And though we feel that many there are who will jeer at this as a far-fetched supposition, who will assert that the pleasure-seekers on Sundays only fall into debauchery and excess, and never know a single thought of the character we have been describing; and though we are quite ready to allow that of some few the remark may hold good; yet it is our firm belief that the majority return to their dark homes in the evening with recruited strength and restored spirits, encouraged, under the prospect of another week of toil, by an active feeling, that the contemplation of the bright blue sky and the beauteous scenery has given rise to within them, that whatever the difference between the hovel and the mansion, the same heaven covers all, and into the same heaven will hereafter be gathered, if found worthy—aye, both the lowly labourer and the exalted lord.

Therefore, we say, let the poorer classes have their recreation on Sun-

days. Do your best, indeed, to make them understand *why* you encourage them in the thus rendering a Sunday a day of amusement rather than of meditation and prayer; but, under present circumstances, place no hindrance in the way of gratification of the kind we have intimated. Set it before them that Sunday ought emphatically to be a day of rest; but that, inasmuch as there went forth a merciful qualification of the command to keep it holy, when pressing circumstances should render a deviation desirable, such deviation may in cases be lawful, and be committed without sin. Say to the poor man, "If no other day be open to you, away on the Sunday, with your wife and your children, to the green fields and lanes; have your day's pleasure, soberly and discreetly; and return in the evening, thankful for the benefit and the gratification you have received. Yet, mark you, under any other circumstances, this advice could not be given. Take away what we may almost speak of as the *absolute necessity* for you and your family, situated as you are, to employ the Sabbath in this manner, and immediately there is removed all excuse for your not going to church. Remember this, the permission above is one authorised to be given in infinite mercy; and remember also, that—

> The Being that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,

may be worshipped with as much fervour and sincerity under the simple canopy of heaven, as within the walls of the most magnificent cathedral."

Now, it will be evident, that if the poor are entitled to recreation on Sundays, only on the grounds stated, there can be no excuse for the rich if they observe not the day with all strictness. With the higher class, Sunday should, indeed, be a day of perfect rest, and every care should be taken not to require any labour on the part of others that can possibly be dispensed with. What need of the services of a carriage and a couple of horses, and a coachman and footman, to reach a church scarce half a mile distant? What need of the afternoon drive in the Park, and the luxurious dinner in the evening? We do think there is a call for reform here: that the aristocracy might manage to *walk* to church, and to *walk* home again; that they might *walk* out, and not ride out, on the Sunday; and that, on that day, they might benefit their digestion by the simplest meals, involving the least possible trouble to their domestics. There is no excuse for Sabbath-breaking on the part of the rich—the rich man, with his abundance of unemployed time, surrounded at all seasons with every comfort and pleasure; it is, indeed, a hard case if he cannot keep the Sabbath-day holy. But the poor man, we own we can listen to him, when he tells us that it is his only day of freedom from a toil that is knocking nails into his coffin. A day in the country will drag out a few of the nails that the past week has inserted. He has a wife and children; if his health fail, they will be cast into misery and want. He knows that it is right to go to church on a Sunday, and he would like to go, yet he lingers. The fresh air would do him and his family so much good—he cannot resist the temptation. And we say there is no need so to do; he may go with an easy conscience. He, and his wife, and his children, may away into the fresh air and enjoy it to the full—only let them remember, as they drink it in in glorious draughts, as they admire the beauteous aspect of Nature, and wonderingly contemplate the clear blue heavens, that Deity in the wood and in the meadow can, even as in the sanctuary, listen to the outpourings of a thankful spirit, and give ear to the utterances of a grateful heart.

NAY, BUT WAS IT A DREAM?

I have heard (but not believ'd) the spirits of the dead
May walk again.

SHAKSPEARE.

Tina! Tina!! Tina!!!
Oui, monsieur.
Pourquoi ne me repondez-vous pas quand je vous appelle?
Je ne vous ai pas entendu, monsieur.
Apportez moi, donc, mon bonnet-de-nuit.
Oui, monsieur. Le voilà.

THIS short scene, about a nightcap, between a cosmopolite Britaine and a Franco-German demoiselle, took place in a summer-residence, or lusthaus, on the brow of one of the spurs of the Odenwald.

Gentle reader, have you ever rested your weary limbs in the Belvidere, on the summit of the Melibocus? It commands precisely the same view, and the scenic panorama is as beautiful as anything the earth's surface can produce.

The luxuriant Bergstrasse, with its castled crags, orchards, and homesteads, immediately underneath. The winding Rhine, glittering at intervals along the wide-spread plain, which, through the hazy atmosphere of an autumnal eve, bore a closer resemblance to a distant inland sea or immense bay than that splendid expanse of land, apportioned to many kingdoms, gladdened with a thousand towns and villages; rich in corn, in wine, and oil. There it lay peaceably at my feet, spread out like a wonderful picture, framed in the thick foliage of the loaded vine, under which I was reclining. Imagination, in a half dreamy state, carried me beyond the cloud-like outline of the Donnerberg, and the blue mountains which skirted the extensive horizon; my heart's spirit took wing, and entered the penetralia of friends far away, and held communion with them. All nature was at rest; not even the ever-sounding trumpet of the restless gnat broke the solemn stillness; but myriads of motes were playing in the sunbeam, as it streamed in through the trellis. "The little motes in the sun," saith the sage Bacon, "do ever stir, though there be no wind."

A mote! Aye, what is a mote? If one could catch one, and with a 100,000,000-magnifying-power solar or other microscope examine its configuration! There they dance and gambol, seemingly close packed together, yet each separate and apart, with, doubtless, ample room and verge enough to avoid jostling. Detach one from the herd: there, there they go, up and down, unsubstantial as phantoms. Wonderful little motes dancing in the sunbeam! Bless my heart! a couple have just lodged on the rim of my spectacles. How they are swelling out—puff! they are off, floating like soap-bubbles in the air; there, now they gently descend and settle side by side on the handrail, and they still grow larger too. By Jupiter, if the pellucid globes do not enclose a—a—how exquisitely pure! how radiant! but how indescribable! Listen! Why, verily, the little motes do converse together, in sweet angelic whisperings!

Now, is there one of us who can look back with satisfaction to our earthly sojourn? I fancy not one. As to myself, there was no end of the

sufferings I endured in the course of that extremely dismal pilgrimage. Have you ever heard of Mahomet, the false prophet?

Mahomet! Never.

Yes; he was long after your mortal state. I was a follower of his, and ardent in the faith. I turned Santon; dwelt in a cave for seventy years, and there mortified myself with stripes and fastings; in fact, I deprived myself of all the little comforts of that life for the better part of a century. And for what? That I might, as I had been taught and really believed, ascend straight to the promised paradise, there to clasp in my arms the blue-eyed houris, whose smiles and endearments were to be the guerdon of the faithful. Fool that I was, to be thus cozened and cheated by a mere camel-driver. And how is it now? Why, I have not even the passions which I curbed and checked with so much difficulty, in order the better to enjoy the pleasures reserved to me by the prophet.

It ill becomes you to complain. You, at all events, died in your green old age, and before your grave was dug for you. What if you had been buried alive as I was?

Buried alive!—in a swoon, eh? or perhaps under the influence of chloroform? How you must have been astonished, when you recovered your consciousness, and surveyed your close-fitting quarters?

You are mistaken. A senate, styling themselves the wisest legislators of earth, and a people who had triumphed in arms over the bravest of mankind, condemned me to this punishment.

You must have been guilty of some dreadful crime—murder, perhaps?

By no means.

What had you done, then?

What had I done, indeed! Ah! what had I done!

You hesitate.

The confession of certain offences committed in our mortal state, is very grating to one's feelings.

Nonsense! what we did in the flesh concerns us but little now. We should honestly and openly admit our past follies. I, for instance, silly fool, during nearly the whole of my earthly pilgrimage macerated and scourged my poor miserable body, which you know could not help it. I am sure you did not behave half so ridiculously. Don't blush; tell me everything. Who cares for the trifling stains upon an old moth-eaten garment, which has been long ago thrown aside, and which cannot be again worn?

(Heaving a sigh.) You have, of course, heard of Rome?

Never.

Why, the Romans conquered the world.

The world! I declare I never heard a syllable about them. But what has this Rome to do with your very extraordinary burial?

I was born in that city—vaingloriously called the Mistress of the Universe. You must know, that the security of Rome was based upon the preservation of certain sacred relics—gifts of the gods; and in keeping alive a fire, which was supposed to have descended from heaven.

This was a very stupid superstition, for a people represented as ruling the whole world by its arms, its laws, and its wisdom.

I dare say you will think it still more extraordinary, when I tell you that the preservation of the sacred fire was entrusted to four virgins, who were *captæ*, or taken to watch over the celestial flame in the temple;

and as the empire was thought to be in danger if the fire happened to be extinguished, the law punished our negligence with death. We were, moreover, devoted to the strictest chastity, under pain of being buried alive.

Ah! I perceive now very clearly why you were hurried to the tomb before you died. But I am astonished that so clever a people should allow their prosperity to depend, of all things, upon the frail tie of virginity.

There was nothing neglected to make us forget the sacrifice. Our privileges and prerogatives were most extensive. Wealth, rank, dignity, were bestowed upon us. We had the principal places at the public triumphs and amusements. Whenever we went abroad, we had the *fasces*—the emblems of the highest dignity—carried before us; and those of the consul, or prætor, were lowered in our presence, and made way for us. And if in our walk, without contract or design, we casually lighted upon a malefactor leading to execution, we had the right of delivering him from the hands of justice.

Very great privileges, certainly. But did you, in the midst of these honours, and this universal respect, consider yourselves recompensed?

In despite of the dreadful punishment which attended a breach of the rule—I—I committed sacrilege.

The violation of your vows must have been owing to some very powerful motive?

The desolation of Rome—the ruin of my family—the vengeance of the gods, and men—and the dreadful punishment in reserve—vanished in the presence of my lover. Did not he, too, risk as much as I did—perhaps more?

Ah! I have nothing to say.

When I was torn by the Pontifex Maximus from the arms of my relatives, I was a child; tranquillity reigned in my bosom when I took the vows, and the innocence in which I had been brought up prevented me from beholding the extent of the sacrifice I was compelled to make. But in the solitude of riper years and mature judgment, the veil of infancy was rent asunder; I felt an insupportable void; my fancy carried me beyond the walls of the temple, in search of some darling object, which it took pleasure to adorn with every attribute of manly perfection. Satiated with the homage of the multitude, I now longed for the liberty of the meanest peasant-girl. I saw nothing in the sacred fire burning upon the altar of Vesta, but an emblem of the restless passion which raged within my bosom.

You were at least more enlightened than I was. Originally the dupe of all these extravagances of which I became the victim, I was the martyr of sincerity; a rare example! But tell me of your lover, this man who induced you to commit the sacrilege; I am interested in him.

He was a Briton, holding exalted rank in the famous legion, Invicti Juniores Britones intra Hispanias. I first saw him in a triumphal procession. He gazed at me with earnest attention, as if he recognised my countenance. A flame seemed suddenly to dart into my heart. I slightly removed the vittæ, which depended from the infula on my head, and stole a hurried glance at him; and now a new feeling arose within me. I was invested with a new being, and instantaneously felt a foretaste of happiness. Ever, when I suspected my lover was in the temple, I studied to

walk with more grace and stateliness, under the purple mantle which hung in a long train from my shoulders. Concealed in the crowd, he watched me. Frequent shouts of acclamation were raised around me upon the festivals: the multitude were ignorant for whose eye I strove to display the dignity of my carriage, and contributed to the pomp of that worship of which my lover was the sole object. But as soon as the crowd was dispersed, and the temple closed and silent, everything around me assumed the aspect of woe; my mind could only feel the sentiments of melancholy, and the tumults of despair; the solitary walls of my cell were the only witnesses of my sobs. I love, said I to myself, in my anguish, and my lover is in the heart of voluptuous Rome. Surrounded by easy and alluring beauties, will he not scorn a triumph which must cost him so much? He will never hazard death for me. The charms of all the women of Rome are at his service; they contend for him, they engage him each in her turn. Ah! he knows not how I adore him. Oh! that I should be condemned to this cruel state of uncertainty.

The Briton very likely said as much on his part.

He had perceived my sentiments, and from that hour he was worthy of me. On the first day of the great festival he visited the temple. My companions and I ranged in order, and carrying in our hands the sacred vessels, walked with slow and solemn steps round the inclosure of the sanctuary. A robe, as white as the purest snow, and nearly slight as gossamer, half revealed our charms. My lover had placed himself amongst the foremost of the crowd when I arrived at the spot where he stood. I gave him a look—half concealed under my vittæ. He answered me by laying his hand on his heart, and at that moment I perceived his eyes sparkle like lightning, and moistened at the same time with tears. Mine became covered with darkness. Fainting, I grasped the vessel, which had almost fallen from my hands; but joy and hope soon filled my heart. Elated and satisfied, I advanced with a firmer step even to the altar. I had now no doubt of his daring—he was mine.

You interest me much, priestess. I, who never wished even to speak of love, now, while in the flesh, listen, with pleasure, to your description of it. I feel something very exciting in it. Continue your tale.

The next night, it became my turn to watch in the temple, to spend the long night within view of the sacred fire in order to keep it alive; its solitary and trembling flame was the only light in the lofty and spacious dome; when the flame grew pale it appeared still more awful, and inspired me with religious terror; but in this dreadful solitude the image of my lover seemed to wander and multiply itself around me. I spread forth my hands to heaven, uttering some inarticulate cries, not daring to offer up to it my culpable vow; and by a contrary sentiment, embracing the statue of Vesta, I exclaimed, "O goddess! if I offend you, cause the ice of this marble, which I press to my heart, to enter into my veins. I burn, and am dedicated to another god; of what avail can it be to thee that the sacred fire should be constantly fed by the hands of a virgin? Why should my homage become less pure by sharing my heart betwixt my worship and my love?" In pronouncing these words I heard a noise. I turned round, and from an opening in the roof I perceived a man prepared, as I thought, to throw himself from the height. I endeavoured to warn him, but was unable to speak. He glided down a rope and fell heavily on the pavement. I shuddered, for I feared he had defiled the

floor of the temple with his blood. I ran to raise him up—he was my lover! He could not speak for some moments, but leaned his head and hands upon a pillar. I was in agony. He recovered himself, and pressed me to his heart. We wandered hand in hand through the vast windings of this solitude; our words, our lips, our souls were soon mingled; transports of delirium and of love drove from my mind the idea both of the place in which I was and of the sacred deposit intrusted to me. Abandoning myself to these new feelings, lost in mutual endearment and delight, the hours swiftly fled away; the future and the past both equally vanished. Aurelius Conanus had become the divinity of the temple—my thoughts were only of him. I did not perceive that darkness began to surround me—that it increased, and was about to envelop the whole temple. The uncertain flame emitted its last gleam; I recollected the danger—I tore myself from the arms of my lover—the flame was pale, and glimmering—for a moment it seemed to rekindle—but the feeble blaze expired just as I reached the altar. A thin smoke which exhaled announced the horrible judgment of the dreaded Pontifex Maximus. I could not conceal my trouble. Aurelius Conanus followed me instantly, and seizing my hand, already cold and icy, he supported my fainting body. I implored Vesta, I implored the god of love. With a strong breath Aurelius Conanus, recalled the extinguished flame. Ye gods! he was then no longer criminal, since all at once I beheld the sacred fire rekindle, blaze, and revive from its embers.

How grateful you must have been to Vesta!

How grateful was I to Cupid! Aurelius Conanus appeared more adorable than ever in my eyes; the danger which I had run rendered him still dearer to me. I pressed him in my arms, and tears of gratitude for the first time equalled those of love.

You were not ungrateful, as far as I can see.

Alas! in the midst of these testimonies of the most vehement affection my pleasures were changed. I felt already the horrors of separation. Day was about to break; and I had need of a supernatural resolution to drive my lover from the temple. Another day renewed my functions as officiating priestess.

Which had become dear to you.

I had named the same place—the same hour—he was sure of the same love. How I wished to have been able to annihilate the interval which placed those slow and cruel hours between moments so short and delicious!

You made me tremble at the hour of danger, when the flame was just expiring, how could you dare to expose yourself again to the same risk, only a few days afterwards?

Ah, Santon, you never wooed! I see it plainly; you never beheld the houris but in the reveries of fancy. Learn, then, what you never conceived. What was it that induced me to engage in the first step? Was it not the yearning of the heart after nature? But love made the second. Love had assumed, in my mind, a character of impatience and fury, to which I abandoned myself. I was proud of my lover—proud of the sacrifice I had committed. A sentiment so new seemed to render every object which had any connexion with my happiness full of the ardour with which my heart was penetrated. I invoked the day; I looked at the sun, and complained of the tediousness of his progress. I could have wished to hurry him to his setting, and so make him accomplish in one day the revolution of the whole interval, so long, and so

cruel. Ah, Santon! I may surely be allowed to expose the whole extent of a weakness which I so cruelly expiated.

I cannot help admiring how little of the vestal you had about you.

Placed at a distance from this hideous temple, I should have been a wife—a mother.

It is well said; and I who have fasted and scourged myself for seventy years, out of a pilgrimage of nearly a century, what good have I done in the world? I piously believed that this was virtue. But they were as foolish at Rome as in Persia; this is at least some consolation. Is the disease, I wonder, universal? But tell me, did Aurelius Conanus return?

Alas! yes; to our mutual misfortune.

How?

Suspicions had been entertained; his steps were watched.

Ah! I tremble for him. This is much worse than the chance of the fire becoming extinguished.

Vesta was avenged!

Cruel goddess! why were such deities invented by men?

She reigned long before I had existence, and I was her slave from my tenth year. Ah, Santon, pity me! I abandoned myself to the raptures which attend successful and happy love. My mind was above terror, superior to grief, and disregarded danger. Calm and happy, I was lulled into that delicious and tender repose, in which the silent feeling of pleasure, unattended with its more violent transports, seems to unite and identify us with the object beloved. Our souls, in unison, were inspired with the same thoughts and the same passions. Ah, how shall I describe that scene of horror which succeeded! Melancholy howlings, and the lengthened accents of woe, make the temple resound from its foundations; armed guards arrive with torches, violate its sacred obscurity; enraged priests—the Pontifex Maximus at their head ——

Priests! Then, indeed, it was all over with you. I already behold you in the fatal cell.

The distress of my disconsolate companions, the reproaches written on their brows, the indignation which glows in every face, and more than all, my lover in chains, struggling in vain, and casting upon me his last parting look—consider all these objects; they besieged at once my eyes, my heart. I beheld the consternation, which, bursting from the narrow limits of the temple, spread over Rome, and extended itself to the utmost limits of her dominions. You would have said that the mighty republic was tottering to its ruin. I was stripped of my sacred vestments; they were now touched with horror. Every order of men in the state foretold the most terrible disasters—public affairs, as well as private, were suspended. One would have thought that Aurelius Conanus, by subduing me to his love, had broken the talisman upon which depended the salvation of the republic and the serenity of the universe.

It was very extraordinary that so grave a people should have chosen so brittle a talisman.

Sentence of death was instantly pronounced upon me by the voice of the pontiffs; they condemned me to expiate my offence in the horrid Campus Sceleratus, without the city-wall; there to descend alive into a kind of cavern, in which were placed, by a cruel pity, bread, water, milk, and a mournful lamp, as if to guide the victim to a foretaste of death, and prolong the punishment to which I was destined. I was interrupted

by no crowd on my way. I was abandoned by all—by friends, by relatives. I found myself surrounded only with priests and executioners, who, with downcast eyes, mournful and silent, guarded me to my tomb. The Pontifex Maximus, as I was about to descend the fatal ladder which was to convey me for ever from the eyes of mortals, wished to exhort me, and tell me of his gods. I imposed silence upon him. "Barbarian, stop!" said I to him. "Thou torest me from the arms of my parents, against their will. I shall descend, without thy contaminating assistance, into the bowels of the earth; there I shall bear no more of thy sanguinary rites. Is it for thee to judge of love? I die content, since Aurelius Conanus must die. I have transgressed the laws of Vesta; but those of nature are more ancient and more sacred. If, during my youth and inexperience, I blindly bore the chains of superstition, I have now broken them. The fire which you preserve on the altar of Vesta shall die; but love, never—for it is kindled by the hand of the almighty Author of Nature. This is the flame which I have cherished—which I have preserved with care—which will not abandon me even in death, or which rather shall survive my ashes."

This address did not of course move the priest?

It did not. I descended the ladder, and entered the pit prepared for me. Judge what I felt, when I saw the solid masonry gradually closing round me, and burying me within its massive embrace, by the light of the dull lamp which was to expire with myself. What remains to be told cannot be expressed. To die slowly, to suffer death a thousand times over, to pass from despair to annihilation, and from annihilation to despair; to suffer thus for the crime of having loved; what moments were those! But during the long progress of my sufferings, I never once complained of love; love was in my heart, and seemed to assuage my grievous pains. The name of Aurelius Conanus was perpetually on my lips, and my greatest torment was to be ignorant of his fate—my only remorse for having been the cause of his untimely death. I pardoned myself my own ruin; but I never ceased to think of Aurelius Conanus so long as my consciousness lasted.

The past must be forgotten, since it is to us now the same thing whether we have been happy or miserable in our mortal state. It is but a dream more than half effaced. Disagreeable reflections ought not to disturb our present repose. Wretched Rome and her bigoted priesthood! Do you imagine that there exists a community of Vestal virgins in the present age?

Are there any Santons, think you?

No doubt of it, and * * * * *

"Holloa! old fellow; what! asleep over your pipe, eh? Come, arouse! the fire-flies are already sparkling among the trees, and you'll catch cold.

"Eh!—what? Where are they gone to?"

"Who? Surely you have not seen the Wild Huntsman and his unearthly train?

"Ah! Fritz, my boy, I am heartily glad to see you. Why, I do believe I have been dreaming; but it is always the way, under the influence of *mon bonnet de nuit*.

"What, this?" demanded my friend, who held it out at the full stretch of his arm, and very tenderly by the top of the tassel—"what, this?"

"'Tis true; there's magic in the web of it."

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

By Madame Paalzow.

Chapter XVIII.

A difference of opinion prevailed among the leaders of the royalist party met in council at the Hague to debate on the proposals of Sir Joseph Douglas, the Scots ambassador. Some urged the young king to refuse the humiliating offers of the Covenanters, while others, deeming it advisable to make any sacrifice for the sake of gaining a footing in Scotland, counselled the king to accept the proposals, and to look forward to a prosperous future for placing himself in a more advantageous condition. But as things wore a favourable aspect in Ireland at that period, the king determined to make an attempt to land there, and therefore refused to comply with the offers of the Scottish parliament, and set out for France, in hopes of engaging the French government to assist him in his enterprise. In the mean time, the Duke of Montrose employed himself in levying an army in Holland, with the view of immediately proceeding to England, and regaining for his young master his rightful inheritance by force of arms; and for this purpose took up his head-quarters at Amsterdam. Lord Fawcett's loyal zeal led him most eagerly to second the efforts of his great colleague, and Urica shared his enthusiasm.

No sacrifice was deemed too great by Lord Fawcett for the attainment of this glorious end; a great part of his property had been confiscated, owing to the share he had taken in the late commotions, but he unhesitatingly devoted all he could command to this noble cause; and Urica, who entered eagerly into all her husband's plans, was so deeply infected by his ardour, that she placed her princely fortune at his disposal. It was not in the nature of a man of Lord Fawcett's ardent temperament to be checked by prudential considerations. He had embarked heart and soul in this great enterprise, and his sanguine imagination never admitted a doubt of success. He therefore agreed to accept the assistance Urica so generously offered, and felt the less scruple in doing so, that several of the European powers had engaged to furnish the Duke of Montrose with subsidies; he obtained a promise that Urica's fortune should be repaid from these funds; and thus he merely considered it as a loan, which would be of the greatest service to the cause, by removing the difficulties arising from the want of ready money.

Yet, notwithstanding this assistance, the obstacles and delays, which were of almost daily occurrence, sorely tried the patience of the leaders, added to the annoyances caused by broken promises, hollow friends, and lukewarm adherents. Many a time Lord Fawcett would return home from a council at the Duke of Montrose's with an aching heart and a clouded brow; and there was but one place where he could find relief for his troubled spirits, and gain new courage for the prosecution of his arduous labours—that was by Urica's side. The true greatness of her mind was now displayed; the noble qualities which had slumbered within her bosom were called into full play; her husband found in her a friend and sup-

porter, whose cool judgment and discrimination could be surpassed by few of the opposite sex.

One morning, as he was returning from an unsatisfactory meeting, he was surprised, on entering his wife's apartment, to hear her gay voice echoed by the merry laughing tones of a child. He raised the curtain, and saw his beautiful Urica seated on an arm-chair in the middle of the room, playing with a lovely little girl of about six years old, who sat on her lap, and whose bewitching grace and radiant beauty caused him to stand for a moment lost in admiration.

As his eye wandered a little further, he observed a pale, emaciated female beside Urica, utterly absorbed in contemplating the charming group formed by Urica and the child. She had bent forward thoughtfully over the arm of the chair, unconscious of the tears that trickled down her cheeks.

Fawcett did not require much penetration to guess that this must be the unfortunate cousin Angela, of whom he had heard so much, and her little Floris; and he could not resist the temptation of playing the part of a spy a little longer, in order to take a more attentive survey of this new cousin.

Though Angela had even then no pretensions to good looks, the changes that had taken place in her mind were of so important a nature, that they could not fail to exercise a favourable influence on her manners and the expression of her countenance. Her attire was simple, yet dignified, and conformable with the fashion of the times. She wore a dress of black velvet, a cap of the finest Mechlin lace, which closely shrouded her face, and a long black lace veil that fell back over her shoulders. This attire, utterly devoid of ornament, did not seem in the slightest degree burdensome to her; her attitude was easy and unrestrained, though exceedingly touching, for she seemed to have forgotten everything around her, in the happiness she felt at seeing Urica tenderly and affectionately clasp her child in her arms.

Though Lord Fawcett was far better pleased with the appearance of his newly-found relative than he expected, he could not suppress his astonishment at the thought of her being the mother of the angelic child Urica was overwhelming with caresses—he was struck with the surprising likeness between this child and Urica, and could not help thinking, that a stranger would not have hesitated to consider her its mother.

He now drew aside the curtains, and so quickly traversed the apartment, that the two ladies had no time to rise in order to greet him.

Ere they well knew that he was in the room, he had seated himself on a low stool at their feet, and taking Angela's hand with the most engaging warmth and sincerity of manner, said, with a smile, "Welcome, cousin Angela! I pray you receive me kindly, as a relative, and accept the assurance of my most sincere esteem and affectionate interest."

The little Floris quickly dispelled the momentary embarrassment with which all the party had been seized, as turning round she fixed her beautiful eyes on Lord Fawcett, still glistening with joy and delight at Urica's playful kindness, and stretching out her hand to his face, she cried, "Are you our cousin?"

Every one laughed at this, and poor Angela felt somewhat relieved. She timidly returned the kind pressure of Lord Fawcett's hand, and em-

boldened by maternal love, said, pointing to Floris, "Accept her as my intercessor. She will at once reward you for your kindness better than I ever can—and she will atone for the wrongs I have inflicted on my family."

"Oh, never speak thus again, Angela," cried Urica, "if you would save me from the pangs of self-accusation. It cuts me to the heart to hear you thus pronounce yourself in fault."

"No, no, mamma!" said Floris, "you are not in fault—indeed you are not." And throwing her arms round her mother's neck, she evinced the greatest anxiety to remove the sorrowful expression of Angela's countenance by her affectionate caresses.

"I see she is not only as lovely, but as good as an angel," whispered Lord Fawcett to his wife, and Urica's absent air, as she looked up to him, proved that she was wholly engrossed in the contemplation of Angela's child.

Floris seemed to have taken a decided fancy to Lord Fawcett, for she devoted her attention to him during all the time he stayed in his wife's apartments, and evinced her admiration in the most *naïve* and engaging manner. She became the bond of union between these two families, so utterly dissimilar in every respect. She spent day after day with Urica, and as her mother, out of consideration for Van der Néess, did not like often to leave her house, Floris soon submitted to stay by herself with her beloved aunt. Everything she saw there flattered her taste for splendour and magnificence, and she felt as happy and contented as a fish in its element.

But though Urica was in the constant habit of receiving Angela and her daughter in her own house, she could not for a long time overcome her feelings so far as to visit the old house of the Purmurands.

At length one day, when Angela came to take home her little daughter, she suddenly said to her, "Will you receive me to-night beneath the old lime-tree in your court of pleasure?"

Poor Angela was so overcome with joy and emotion at receiving Urica's promise to grant the wish she had so long cherished in vain, that she could only answer by a flood of tears.

But what a sensation she created at home, when she returned with the news of Lady Fawcett's approaching visit. Van der Néess had expected this event so long, and so much too soon, that he no longer reckoned upon it. On the first days after Urica's arrival, he had lain in wait beside her house, as well as beside his own, because he suspected the time of his absence would be selected for this visit; and he succeeded in persuading himself that his connexion with his noble cousin was now established on a proper footing, and the past ought to be forgotten and forgiven. He deemed it incumbent on him not to suffer her airs, in case she chose to play any, and make an attempt to avoid him again, of which he was warned by a secret presentiment which he could not suppress.

But for some time past he seemed neither to have wished nor expected this event. He was unable altogether to prevent Angela's visits to her aunt, but he would at times break out into contemptuous speeches on the subject of disorderly conduct or extravagance. He often called suddenly to Angela when she was quietly at work, and inquired what she had done at her aunt's—whether she had been attacked for money, betrayed any secrets, or made rash promises? Then, in a fit of his old frantic rage, he would run about the room, shaking his fist in the air, and talk of beggars,

plunderers, and fortune-hunters, and threaten to treat them as they deserved.

Angela did not pay much attention to such ebullitions, for at first she innocently set them down to his renewed fears of the separation which had formerly been projected. At a later period, when she had been admitted into the confidence of her relatives, and was aware of the steps Urica had been obliged to take in order to place her fortune at her husband's disposal, Angela was seized with a sudden apprehension lest Van der Néess, who kept a sharp look-out on all that was going on in the great money market, might, by his artful cunning, have spied out what Urica was so anxious to conceal from general notice.

In consequence of this, she watched him closely when she communicated to him the tidings of Urica's approaching visit, and her fears were not diminished by his manner.

He burst into a loud fit of laughter when he heard of it, and grew very red. "Well, my little Angela," he cried, "let her come, and her lord earl too, if he likes. I am not the man to bear malice; she has nothing to fear from me, and can neither bring honour nor shame on a man like Van der Néess. Circumstances are changed," he added, drawing himself up haughtily. "Certain people would give much now-a-days to possess the solid wealth they once sneered at; for when our own possessions are about to dissolve in empty air, we find out the value of other people's! Yes, indeed, my little Angela, that is the way, though you stare at me in such surprise; but say, has your proud aunt said nothing to you—eh? What makes her come just now? Don't you understand, little Angela? Ah, ah! I'm up to her," cried he, jumping up gaily; "the knife is at her throat, and that has sharpened her eyes to find out the house she once despised. D'ye think she would still refuse to take the hand she once refused to touch? D'ye think so? Look here! I'll tell you what, if Van der Néess chose to be a fool, and do what the dainty dear would wish—if he chose to put that into his rejected hand which her ladyship is in want of—take my word for it, she would draw off her glove with a bland smile, and lay her little soft velvet hand in mine. But," he continued, in an angry and scornful tone, and making a low bow, "then it would be my part to turn my back and snub her ladyship! Oho! Van der Néess well knows the weight of his hand, and this proud fool shall not make it any lighter."

"Will you tell me what you mean, Van der Néess?" said Angela. "You have certainly said many harsh wicked things, and yet I suspect you are so carried away by your passion, that you do not exactly know what you mean. But you will understand, that I am anxious you should be in a proper and composed state of mind when my aunt arrives—in case you intend to be present during her visit—or receive her when she comes."

"Depend upon it, Angela, your proud lady aunt will not dispense with Van der Néess's company to-day. If you like to see some fun, I'll keep out of the way when first she arrives. What will you bet me, that she will not look around for *me* to-day, and express a wish that her dear nephew may be summoned. And then for a volley of polite speeches to make poor me forget how I have been treated. D'ye hear, you little simpleton; you can't understand or conceive all this. I'm a good hand at giving you riddles to guess, ain't I? Ha! ha! Show me the man at the

Exchange, or at the markets, who is capable of keeping Van der Néess in the dark."

"Well, well, be it so," said Angela, making use of a little stratagem; "as I cannot understand you, it is possible you may be right in thinking that my aunt desires to see you, and it would much gratify me to see her pay you due respect as master of the house. Yet we can only ascertain that, if you keep to your intention of absenting yourself at first."

"Certainly," cried Van der Néess; "I have made up my mind to do so, and I shall not change my plans. 'Pon my word, I am curious to know how your lady aunt will set about it, when she takes to flattery. But look here! you will find out, then, what stuff Van der Néess is made of, and don't fancy you can do anything with me—mind! not a word—or I shall teach you both that I know what is due to myself."

"I have not the slightest doubt that you know what is due and advantageous to yourself, and, certainly, I have given you but little cause to enforce any severe precepts," said Angela. "But no more of that now. You had better withdraw, since it is your wish to do so, otherwise my aunt will surprise us, and I shall not be able to judge whether her sentiments are indeed such as you imagine."

Van der Néess complied with this request, and, as was often the case with him, scarcely knew whether he was in a transport of delight or rage. The transition from the first state to the latter was so rapid with him, that those around him had learnt to dread his paroxysms of joy; since experience had proved to them that little good was to be gained by them, and that his usual sulky, morose manner, was alone to be considered as a warrant for some degree of peace and security.

Although Urica did not repent of her promise to visit Angela, an indefinite feeling of discomfort took possession of her mind at the thought of entering this gloomy domestic circle, and seeing Van der Néess, whom she so cordially hated, by Angela's side.

Hitherto she had only seen her poor niece in her own house, apart from the revolting companion of her noble, self-sacrificing life. But now an involuntary sigh escaped her as the carriage stopped before the old house of the Purmurands; she had invited Mynherr van Marseeven to meet her there, and back her in the object of her visit; she now thought of him with a sort of anxiety, and wished he were there to protect her.

But she felt greatly relieved when she saw Angela and Floris come forth alone to meet her, and on entering the old house, so full of painful reminiscences, no one appeared to greet her but old Susa. She affectionately accosted this faithful domestic, and pressed into her hands a considerable present of money, which she had long destined for her.

A weight was removed from her heart, when she entered the court without seeing the dreadful apparition of the master of the house; she sat down beside her niece beneath the old lime-tree, and they both indulged for a while in the painful feelings which the remembrance of the past called forth.

Urica at length broke silence. "My dear Angela," she said, "will you send your little Floris to amuse herself for a while with the flowers yonder? I have something of importance to communicate to you, and I think she had better not remain here, for what I have to say concerns her nearly."

Susa hereupon charged Floris to gather a nosegay for her aunt Urica,

and finally persuaded her to retire to the banqueting-room, and practise a new dance to the tune of Caas' fiddle, in order to perform it before her aunt in the court, when the moon should have risen.

Urica seized Angela's hand, and said, in a tone of deep emotion—

"You know that it has not pleased Heaven to bless our union with children; when England has recovered from its present state of anarchy and confusion, my husband's children will be amply provided for. The birth of your daughter, and the frequent dangers to which we were exposed by the warlike operations of my husband, whom I sometimes accompanied in his expeditions, induced us to think of our death; and Lord Fawcett insisted on my disposing of my property in favour of my own relations—that is to say, of your daughter. I must confess to you my weakness; the thought of making a will in favour of a Van der Néess was extremely painful to me, and I fell into melancholy contemplations on the subject, till one day I happened to take up the letter in which you announced to me the birth of this child, and said further, that at her baptism, when you gave her the name of Floris, after our Spanish ancestor, Madame van Marseeven had, in virtue of her right as sponsor, given her the name of Casambort, while her husband, the second sponsor, had, by a similar title, added that of Gröneveldt. This did not make much impression on me at the time, as I considered it as a thing of no consequence, done merely with the view of pleasing us all. But now that my thoughts had perhaps taken the same direction as theirs, it struck me forcibly, and after consulting with Lord Fawcett, I wrote to Mynherr van Marseeven on the subject. A succession of disastrous occurrences took place at that time; we were obliged to leave England, and it was not till long after that I received Mynherr van Marseeven's answer, which had missed us repeatedly, and been sent after us all over France. He stated, that both he and his wife had at the time conceived the possibility of restoring Floris to the rights of her family name, since cases had come to their knowledge, where families of high rank and ancient names, who during the civil wars had lost their rights by being dispersed or impoverished, had succeeded in re-establishing their prerogatives. Mynherr van Marseeven went on to say, that the course to be pursued for such an end, was first to procure an attestation of the justice of the claims from the states-general, and then to have them confirmed by the Emperor of Germany, who would cause a new deed or certificate to be made out, attesting the validity and genuineness of the old claims of the family, and thus any interruption that might have taken place in the regular line, would be rendered of no import, and the person in question entitled to resume the family name and enjoy all the privileges thereto belonging. You will suspect now, my dearest Angela," continued Urica, more tenderly, as she observed how the blood went and came on Angela's countenance, while her eyes were cast on the ground, and a slight tremor agitated her frame, "you will now suspect what I have ventured to do without asking your consent! Mynherr van Marseeven was in possession of all your papers; he sent them to me at my request, for you know my husband soon after repaired to the German court. I succeeded in obtaining a private audience of the emperor, and myself related to him your hard fate, and your heroic resolution not to sever the marriage-bonds which deprived

you of your rights. I then petitioned him to reinstate the daughter in the privileges to which she could lay claim through her mother, and obtained his gracious consent. Mynherr van Marseeven then took the necessary steps with the states-general in my name; the document was drawn up in due form, and laid before the emperor, who ratified it, according to his promise. Here is this document. I have brought it for your inspection, and pray you to peruse it."

But Angela, with a last effort, pushed away this important parchment deed, with its weighty seals; her pale lips moved; but she was unable to utter a word, and sank back into the arms of her affrighted aunt.

Urica gazed on her for a moment, uncertain how to act; but she soon decided it would be most expedient to conceal this natural agitation from the other inmates of the house, since she felt assured Angela would soonest recover in her arms, and thus escape the annoyance of questions and remarks.

She therefore merely produced her smelling-bottle, and unfastened Angela's dress to give her air, and was soon rewarded for her exertions by her niece's returning consciousness. When she opened her eyes, her first glance was fixed inquiringly on Urica, and as all the past flashed on her memory, she burst into tears.

"These tears will relieve your oppressed heart," said Urica, kindly; "but as they prevent you from reading, I will communicate to you the contents of this document. It states that the daughter of Angela van Grönevelt, descended by the mother's side from the house of Casambort, by the father's from that of Grönevelt, and united in marriage to the burgher and merchant, Jacob van der Néess—that this daughter, at the request of her great aunt, the Countess Fawcett—by birth and marriage Countess van Casambort—is now invested with full and indisputable rights to bear the name and arms, and enjoy the privileges of the noble families of Grönevelt and Casambort; that she is elevated to the rank of countess, and that no interruption that may have taken place in the regular line of succession shall be able to invalidate her claims. This document may either be made public at once, or kept secret for the time being, according to the will of her friends and relatives. She is entitled to produce it either before or after her majority; and even if she should never make use of it, she will still, in virtue of this document, irrevocably be entitled to the name and title of—Floris, Countess van Casambort!"

"Casambort!" faltered Angela; "Casambort! and no longer Van der Néess, like her father and mother? Is she to be separated from her parents—and the name she bears by the will of Heaven, to be taken from her as a stain? Shall she learn to look upon it as a disgrace, from which her friends have saved her, and yet be our child—the daughter of those who must retain this name?"

Angela would have been stifled by her emotion had she not thus given vent to her feelings of anguish. She was unable to reflect on the impression her words might produce, for she was urged on by an irresistible impulse to express what had passed in her thoughts during the moments of torture in which she had been forced to listen to her aunt's account.

"Angela, Angela," cried Urica, in a tone of the greatest alarm and surprise, as the document fell from her hands, "is it possible that this affair should have called forth such feelings in you!"

Angela threw herself at her aunt's feet with a cry of anguish, and hiding her face in her hands, cried, in a transport of excitement—

"Oh forgive me, forgive me, I have again wounded your feelings. Alas, I am destined to cause you sorrow, to frustrate your kindest intentions! Yet, have pity on me, and remember that none of the pleasures of this world have fallen to my share; that when first my mind was aroused to consciousness, I found that the happiness of this life was lost to me for ever—remember, that nothing was left to me but confidence in God and the hope that I was acting well in His sight, aunt! God in His mercy sowed the seeds of peace and resignation in my bosom; they grew up and gained strength with every day of my life; I learnt to overcome myself and the world, which tempted and tormented me; and I will now humbly confess to you, that I have learnt that those who live in close communion with God, and with Him alone, acquire a clearness of perception which enables them infallibly to discern between right and wrong; and thus I —even I,—poor, insignificant, neglected being that I am, often distinguish what is right sooner than others, and I feel as if God himself pointed it out to me. Aunt, when first you spoke to me, a great emotion overpowered me, for, like the prophet of old, I struggled with God, and he threw me down; but when I awoke, he had revealed himself unto me."

"Angela—enthusiast!" cried Urica, with a strange mixture of feeling. "Whither are your thoughts wandering?"

"Can I be in an error?" asked Angela, throwing her arms affectionately around Urica. "Know you not that our heavenly Father does not give stones to those who ask him for bread; and would you have me believe that he would do so to me who, like a living prayer, have watched for him, and sought him unceasingly, who at length learnt to believe firmly that He must show me the way to Himself? Or do you mean a virtuous feeling when you speak of enthusiasm, and not what the world designates by that term—a hollow, empty delusion of the sensual heart?"

"Angela, dearest! what are you thinking of?" said Urica, gently. "Oh, trust me, my heart could never blame you; nay, more, I begin to think my worldly zeal has led me into error, and that your simple, truthful views have left me far behind."

"Ah, who shall say that?" said Angela, humbly. "But, my dearest aunt, I pray you give me the assurance that you are not in anger with me, and that you have some pity for the inward conviction which renders me averse to your plans."

"Averse, then," cried Urica, startled anew by this plain declaration. "Are you really averse to them? But do you know that such a decree is irrevocable?"

"Not more irrevocable," said Angela, with surprising energy, "than the fact that this little girl, whom God has so richly endowed, was born here—beneath the roof of her father—of the mother who bears his name, and that she has thus found the place which her Heavenly Father destined her to fill in this world."

"And yet, Angela," returned Urica, relaxing a little in zeal, "you look upon this child as the bond of union between our families—as the means of atoning to us and to you for the injuries that have been inflicted on you; and it is partly for this end you seek to develop in her all the advantages of body and mind of which you consider yourself so cruelly defrauded."

"Is that not a noble ambition?" cried Angela; "one that God has per-

mitted to exist in my heart beside my love for him? Ah, my dear aunt, to train up a lovely girl, so as to make her a comfort to us all, and a pledge of gratitude to the God who gave her to me. This is a noble aim—a hope to which I fondly cling, and which I cannot relinquish; yet I must be on the watch to guard against evil. How could I educate my child to be a good daughter if I suffered her to become a countess and bear another name? She would scarcely cease to be a child ere she would discover that her father was so low a person, that his name was considered to affix a stain to her; and should not I thus lead her into temptation, and myself instil into her heart what the power of nature may perhaps preserve her from—contempt of her father?"

"I can no longer refute your arguments," said Urica. "Let us consult with Mynherr van Marseeven; he promised to meet me here, in order to settle the official part of the business with your husband. He must have been in the house some time, for I heard him knock and enter while you were insensible. Perhaps he has been conferring with Van der Néess before coming to us."

"Heaven forbid," exclaimed Angela, in evident alarm. "I trust Van der Néess knows nothing about it, for the thought of profit or advantage of whatsoever kind is a sore temptation to him, and he is apt to be obstinate in error; add to which, he has been thrown into a state of great excitement by your visit. It is by a mere chance I have been able to keep him from us so long."

Meanwhile, Van der Néess had stationed himself at the window of one of the upper apartments, whence he could see the Countess Urica enter without being observed himself, and he had watched her attentively, in the expectation of her turning to look for him, and evincing a desire to salute him.

Van der Néess was distinguished among his brethren in usury for his superior cunning and shrewdness; and from being in the constant habit of negotiating large sums, and making important calculations, had acquired great experience and a high reputation at the money-market. He had in consequence been consulted by his brother usurers in the matter of advancing money on the Countess Urica's property, and had not hesitated to give the usual assistance, as long as the case appeared to him perfectly safe. The frequency of her demands proved how quickly the money was disbursed; and Van der Néess had for some time previous withdrawn himself from the business, under the impression that the greater part of her fortune must be dissipated. Thus he could ascribe Urica's sudden determination to pay the visit she had so long delayed, to no other motive than her intention of effecting a loan from him—the rich Van der Néess—whose wealth was then a public theme. This thought filled him with malicious joy, for he made it a principle never to lend money except on the most perfect securities, and with the certainty of reaping extraordinary profits. On the present occasion, he determined to give a decided refusal; he rejoiced at the prospects of revenging himself on the person he most hated in the world, because she had treated him with the deepest contempt, and most proudly and decidedly repelled his advances.

He anxiously awaited the summons, concerning which he had betted with Angela, and his impatience waxed stronger with every moment; but on looking out of the windows into the court, he perceived, to his dismay, that the two ladies were conversing together with the greatest ease, with-

out in the least appearing to miss him. The idea of losing his expected triumph was insupportable to him; he rushed away from the window, coursed all over the house, then stood irresolute—shifting from one leg to another, yet no one appeared to summon him. At length his attention was arrested by a loud knock at the door. Mynherr van Marseeven and the sheriff, Cornelius Hooft, entered, and Van der Néess then felt persuaded that his conjectures would prove correct, and that the proud countess had deputed the mighty burgomaster to prepare him for her request.

A ludicrous struggle took place in Van der Néess' bosom: his natural cowardice, and his miserable servile disposition, instinctively urged him to cringe and fawn before Mynherr van Marseeven, that mighty dignitary of the town; and yet he thought it consistent with his dignity to give himself the airs of a rich, haughty man, and had firmly resolved to turn off any proposal that should be made to him, in the name of the Countess Urica, with offensive remarks and scornful allusions.

The first address of the chief burgomaster was certainly calculated to confirm his suspicions, for he expressed a wish to speak to Van der Néess in private. Poor Floris, Caas, and the fiddle were immediately expelled from the old banqueting-room. Van der Néess, with an air of repulsive, awkward officiousness, invited his distinguished guests to enter.

Mynherr van Marseeven then opened the case—in a manner somewhat different from what Van der Néess had anticipated—by acquainting him of the testamentary dispositions of the Countess of Fawcett in favour of his daughter Floris.

The chief burgomaster was somewhat disconcerted to find that this communication, which he had expected would produce a great effect on Van der Néess, was heard by the latter with an air of indifference, and elicited no reply. The truth was, that Van der Néess looked on it in another light. "Bah," thought he; "a noble donation that—when I know that my lady, the generous Countess of Fawcett has taken good care to clear out her chests and coffers!" Thus, he considered it merely as a feint, resorted to with the view of bribing him to agree to a loan.

In fact, Mynherr van Marseeven was not as well informed as Van der Néess of the precarious condition of Urica's fortune, though he had no doubt she must have given up some considerable sums to her husband.

"Well," said Van der Néess at length, on being asked his opinion regarding the testamentary dispositions, "I think the matter might have been settled without any questions or formalities. Angela is my wife—there is no disputing that—and Angela's daughter is the natural heiress of her aunt—methinks there was no need of a will to make that as clear as day. But as to the rest, I know the laws: will or no will—our lady aunt is not so old as that she may not yet have natural heirs, and then—then we shall have had all this fuss for nothing." Thus saying, he burst into a savage, scornful laugh, and flattered himself he had proved his shrewdness.

"Van der Néess!" said Mynherr van Marseeven, "you forget that the Countess Fawcett's fortune is entirely at her own disposal, and that the degree of your relationship does not warrant your daughter in making any lawful claims on it, and consequently she is solely indebted to the love and kindness of her aunt for this disposition."

"Well, it may be so for anything I care," said Van der Néess, rub-

bing his hands up and down his plush inexpressibles, and swinging himself backwards and forwards in his chair. "She'll soon manage to give an account of her fortune, I warrant; let her bequeath it to whom she likes, I do not care a doit for it," he continued, grinning from ear to ear; "and if this generous aunt thinks she will gain many thanks from me, or get some advantage out of me, she has greatly mistaken your humble servant, for nothing that occurs in Amsterdam and at the money-market escapes me—and, 'pon my word, I've always thought that those who would make a will must first have something to leave. Ha, ha, ha!" cried he, laughing at his own wit, and winking knowingly to Mynherr van Marseeven.

The latter was inclined to think that Van der Néess might have better means than he himself of judging of the amount of certain large sums taken up by Urica, and that hence his suspicious, fearful disposition led him to despair of ever possessing the property offered to him. At all events, the ungrateful manner in which the first part of this communication had been received by Van der Néess did not encourage him to proceed with the rest; since he felt persuaded Van der Néess would attach far less importance to his next offer, and the prospect of its being rudely rejected was painful to the good burgomaster's feelings, as it seemed an insult to his high station.

Yet he felt that the communication must be made, and having exchanged a look of mutual understanding with Cornelius Hooft, who could scarcely suppress a smile at the false position they stood towards this brutal fellow, he overcame his reluctance so far as to proceed:

"In order to give your daughter a right to the estates of Casambort," said he, "it was necessary to procure for her those privileges of rank and station which will entitle her to make a claim on these estates; and thus, the Countess Fawcett having first obtained the consent of the states-general, has procured from his Imperial Majesty a document, authorising your daughter to bear the rank and name of Countess van Casambort."

Van der Néess' provoking indifference had suddenly given way as he listened to these tidings. His eyes seemed ready to start out of his head; he sat perfectly motionless, and, bending forward in his chair, stared fixedly at the speaker. Mynherr van Marseeven was fully satisfied with the effect he had produced. When he ceased speaking, Van der Néess uttered one of his savage cries, then bursting into a hoarse laugh, ejaculated, in a loud voice,

"The deuce! That was no bad thought of our noble aunt. So my precious child is really to be a countess, and bear the noble name of her proud lady aunt. Well, that is something to speak of, and it will cost me no money either. I always thought of buying a title for her, if I should ever be rich enough, for it is a thing many do who acquire wealth; and I wanted to prevent her grand relations from sneering at my Floris. But where was I to get the money for such a thing? It's no trifling expense. However, if our lady aunt does not pay all the expenses, it's no affair of mine. I have had no hand in it, for I have nothing to spare for such things."

Here Van der Néess' nervous horror of expense suddenly seized on his mind, and, starting from his chair, he ran wildly about the room, uttering incoherent sounds, and thus presenting a dreadful yet burlesque picture, which, to Mynherr van Marseeven and his companion, was a novel, yet surprising sight.

"Or perhaps," cried he, growing more furious every moment; "perhaps this is the snare into which poor Van der Néess is to be caught, and the lady countess expects that, out of gratitude for this little story, Van der Néess is to loosen the strings of his purse whenever she whistles, till all the scanty property he has so hardly and honestly earned is scattered to the winds, like her own. Look here!" he shrieked, apparently no longer conscious of what he said or did, "it is just as if two thieves were to break into a house, after they had managed to throw the owner off his guard, and fall to and empty his purse, and then say to him, 'Thank us for having made you a beggar.'"

Van der Néess continued for some time in this state, uttering savage cries, and making frantic gestures, for this was one of the numerous instances of the sudden transition of feeling to which he was subject—from a transport of joy, into which he had been thrown by the tidings of Floris's elevation to rank, to a paroxysm of rage, because he did not permit himself the full enjoyment of any happiness, since he could not divest himself of the fear that he should be made to pay for it.

For a moment the two gentlemen were silent, unable to overcome their surprise at this spectacle. Then Cornelius Hooft, with sudden energy, struck his fist on the table with such force that everything shook around him, and, in an authoritative voice, commanded Van der Néess to sit down instantly.

THE PRISON COACH.

A covenant;—we will have these things set down by lawful counsel, and lest the bargain should catch cold and starve, I will fetch my gold and have our two wagers recorded. SHAKSPEARE.

To such as are wholly unpressed for time, and not caring to turn each day perhaps to its best account, by accomplishing much within a short space, there is no way that a small party of from two to four individuals can travel more comfortably than they do in Italy per vettura. The vettura is an exceedingly capacious, easy, and well-lined carriage on four wheels, with ample pockets for bread and cheese, or a roast joint of meat, or chickens; with abundant conveniences for a dozen or more bottles, hooks for garments, racks for canes and umbrellas, and, not unfrequently, a well-secured small bookshelf, occupies a snug place in the corner of the vehicle. The carriage itself, drawn by four spanking, well-groomed horses, with harness attempting some relics of by-gone finery, and traces of rope—of which, by-the-way, the least we say the better, suffice it that it be strong, and answereth the purpose. Our driver on the occasion to which we refer was Giuseppe Alcantari, and never was worthy of the whip more proud of his position or vain of his vocation. Devoted to his calling, there were few of his time to compare with this hero of the road; and truly, when we consider for a moment the multitudinous nature of his callings, we may be surprised that "one small head" was equal to the task. In addition to the cares of his cattle and carriage—enough, in truth, for one man's time—it was his bounden duty also to provide for those of the human species, whoever they might chance to be, that fate had given to him as passengers. These, resigning themselves to the *dolce far niente* sentiment of the Italian clime, "take no heed for the morrow, what they shall eat or what they shall drink," but yielding

themselves implicitly to the control of Giuseppe, feel, with every prolonged crack of the whip, that they were more wise in so doing than they possibly could have been had they relied on their own resources in a country where they were perfect strangers. Multitudinous, in truth, are the callings of Il Condottiera del Vettura; not to revert to the cares consequent on horses and carriage, he is the grand provider, steward and caterer, for all his passengers. Early breakfasts, *cafe latté*, the *déjeûner à la fourchette*, more substantial at noon, and *il pranzo grande* at seven o'clock of some eight or ten covers of well-cooked dishes, all come through his providing;—like the great magician in Eastern fable, the viands come, as it were, at the moving of his wand. And then, too, the bargaining—the petty dealing and higgling so necessary, yet so annoying, for there is no country on earth where so much is asked, and so little taken, as Italy. The rooms we occupied, with their beds, fuel, and all conveniences,—turnpikes and *doganierie*, *lasciare andares* and *lasciare residentes*, with fees to servants and tolls to bridges, were all matters for Giuseppe; while our boxes, trunks, portmanteaus, carpet bags, writing-desks, umbrellas and canes, were as safe under his care as if they were deposited in your banker's vault, and under his own patent lock and key.

Our travelling party of four gentlemen were peculiarly fortunate at the time to which we refer in the selection of our carriage, it happening to be one that had been expressly fitted up by a Florentine nobleman for his own especial use for a peculiar occasion, and as there is a story chiming with the choice of a coach, we will at once begin it here.

On an occasion of some festive nature a meeting of gentlemen took place at Florence, when the conversation happening to turn upon horses, carriages, and modes of Italian travel, as compared with those of other lands, a wager was laid by the Marquis San Pisanio with one of the gentleman of the party that he would travel alone, by vettura, from Florence to Rome by the Sienna route, and back again to Florence by the Perugian, without once getting out of the carriage on any pretext whatever until he had again returned back to Florence. The time to be occupied, the usual one of from twelve to fourteen days, or longer, if he chose, and to remain at Rome as long as he pleased, provided that he quitted not his carriage-prison. According to the custom of Tuscany, the conditions of the wager, which was for the sum of 1000 *scudi*, about 200*l.* sterling, were duly entered, witnessed, and registered at the office of Del Contracto Civile—a mode of proceeding by which all wagers are legalised in Tuscany, and the losing party are as much compelled to pay as they would be a just debt of any other nature. And now to the necessary preparations for departure.

Giuseppe Alcantari, well known throughout all Italy by those that travel, and much respected for his honesty and fidelity, was fortunately at home, and at once summoned to wait upon the marquis. On apprising him of the nature of the duty he had undertaken to perform, Giuseppe was made acquainted with all the circumstances of the contract, and was at once chosen to be the conductor. He forthwith accompanied the marquis, that he might select an easy and capacious carriage, and have all the necessary alterations made that were indispensable to the comfort and convenience of his noble prisoner. The carriage chosen, suitable workmen were immediately set to work, and after the performance of the wager, this very carriage became in turn ours for a like journey, though not under similar circumstances. But to our tale. Various were the

kinds of handicraft necessary to fit out the vehicle for its destined journey. In the first place, immediately underneath the seat of the conductor, a stout iron-hooped cask, capable of containing three or four gallons, was secured, and leading from this into one corner of the interior of the carriage was a zinc tube, terminating with a customary turncock. This was to contain the necessary supply of water, and Giuseppe was instructed, as a part of his daily duty, to have the cask filled every morning while they were absent; for it should have been mentioned, that no supplies either of food or drink were to be furnished after starting on the journey, and consequently the marquis was compelled to victual his carriage for the whole voyage at once—the renewal of water daily being the only exception.

And now for the bed. Longitudinally with the carriage, and occupying its entire length, a narrow sacking bedstead, with hinges to turn it up during the day, was fitted with a hair mattress and all the necessary adjuncts of pillow, bolster, and counterpane, and things thereunto belonging, even to the boot-jack, slippers, and hooks. A looking-glass, to enable the marquis to carry on the process of shaving, was nicely fitted into one side of the coach, while, underneath, a toilet-table was arranged, after the fashion of the bedstead. The victualling department was confided to a Marchand des Comestibles Française who catered for crowned heads, as being more skilled in estimating the quantity and variety that one individual might require on such an expedition; and boiled hams, collared beef, *pigeon à la volaille*, *dindon truffé*, and *vitello à la mougana*, with meat pies and poultry puddings, preserved vegetables and fruits both fresh and dried, with confectionery in abundance, and various wines of rich flavour, *à la discretion*, made up, on the whole, an outfit that was no less worthy of the marquis than the man. With a well-selected library of choice authors, nicely fitted upon shelves in one corner of the carriage, with pens, ink, and paper in profusion, and ever so many pounds of wax candles, adapted in size to the neat candelabras in every corner of the coach, not only to cheer the solitude of night, but at the same time to light up "his parlour, his kitchen, and hall." With all these, and many other unmentioned *agrèmens de voyage*, who would not willingly have placed themselves in the position of the marquis? And what difficulty or hindrance, our reader will say, can reasonably prevent his fulfilment of the contract? This is certainly most true. There was nothing difficult in the passive performance of the wager; but it must be mentioned that the marquis was a gentleman who, from boyhood, had evinced a peculiar restlessness of manner—ever active, constantly moving about, and seeming to possess a nervous organisation of extreme susceptibility to action — an almost unnatural irritability characterising all his muscles of voluntary motion. And then, too, he had been brought up from his infancy, as all Italian children are, with the luxury of many servants to minister to his wants, so that it was supposed to be one of the things almost impossible for him to make even the necessary arrangements beforehand, or that he could on any terms consent to attend to all his personal requirements for so long a time, giving up, too, as he necessarily must, the charms of society, of which he was so distinguished an ornament and lover.

What would the world say, and more than that, what did the wits say? *Per Baccho!* What! the gay Marquis San Pisanio become a hermit? turn *valet de place* to himself, become a Florentine Diogenes, and live in a coach? But it was too late to recede; the wager had been announced

to the public *per avviso*, and the marquis's opponent in the wager, better knowing the *ennui* and care-consuming thoughts that ever visit us when a highly social being like the marquis is left wholly to himself, had relied on these sentiments, rather than any impossibility in the feat itself, as the ground on which he hoped to be the winner, especially, too, as the sum at stake was not immense. It is certainly most true, that to the noblemen of some lands the 200*l.* might seem to be no great temptation ; still it is, nevertheless, an amount of ready coin not at all times to be found in the coffers of the nobles of Italy, and without question had its weight at this time.

The morning for departure has arrived. According to custom, the registered wager having been duly announced in the *Gazetta de Friénze* and other journals, many of the friends of the traveller, besides a multitude of the curious and idle, were assembled around the Porta del Palozzo San Pisanio, where, at six o'clock in the morning, the carriage, with its equipments complete, and its conductor, honest Giuseppe, were both on the eve of departure. Nothing is ever done in Italy without bustle, confusion, and noise; and the snorting of horses, yelping of dogs, grunts, gutturals of the facchino and ejaculations of the curious lookers-on, as box after box and trunk upon trunk was packed away and strapped down for the journey, could only be exceeded by the roar of *addios*, *bon viaggios*, that greeted the ears of the marquis as he suddenly sprang into the carriage ; and off and away rattled the wheels, and crack, crack went the whip, now in its accurately-measured coil taking off the head of a startled hen, or inflicting an almost equal penalty on some vagrant dog, with a precision known only to the initiated in cruelty as well as whip-cracking.

Fairly *en route*, the first day or two wiled away pleasantly enough ; what with the alternate enjoyment of some favourite author—the sitting long at his solitary meals—cutting away slice upon slice of his savoury viands, like a voluntary Robinson Crusoe in a coach, and while sipping his delicate native wines, he began to consider the fulfilment of the terms of his wager as an easy task. The machinery of his bed was excellent and easily arranged; and when the carriage was locked up for the night in the coach-house, he lighted up his palace and sat till bedtime reading or writing—" the monarch of all he surveyed."

With the third and fourth day of travel the carriage wended on its way through the grand scenery of the mountains of La Scala, but as the whole route had frequently been traversed before by the marquis in many hunting expeditions and on other occasions, he derived little gratification from the beauties of the landscape ; besides, he is not quite so well as usual; his appetite to-day is not good, and he passed a restless night; still his animal spirits are most excellent. On—on—day after day through Viterbo and Acquapendente; the Papal States are passed, and on the seventh day Baccano is near at hand, from whence the first view is had of the unsurpassed domes and ruins of the Eternal City. With nothing to vary the monotony of life, the marquis became a prey to the most extreme dejection of spirits. His health was not good ; there was a feverish restlessness about him that completely deranged his appetite; and the functions of the liver and tributary organs seemed to be performed in a very imperfect manner. Still he exerted himself to wile away the tedious hours of his daily imprisonment until the sense of uneasiness or fatigue might remind him of his couch. Unfortunately, no such sense came to his relief; the privation of all bodily exercise acting primarily by producing

derangement in the organs of digestion and assimilation, and sympathetically also on the whole nervous system, the sensation of repletion and fulness takes the place of those of natural weariness, ever consequent upon exercise, and sleep is thenceforth banished from the pillow, though it be of down. As his previous habits, too, had ever been such as gave him much exercise, so had he never before felt the annoying restlessness of lying his head on a sleepless pillow; but now this was almost insupportable, and although free from any severe bodily suffering, yet was he the victim to a state of watchfulness painful beyond conception. So true is it, that to the just performance of the functions of life and its consequent enjoyment, a certain degree of labour is absolutely necessary; it is one of the balance-wheels of existence, by which the whole machinery of man's organisation is kept in healthy motion. Let the balance-wheel be impaired by rust, derangement in the works tributary to it is as certain as it is in the instrument of analogy we have chosen, the clock.

Oh! how painful is the sensation of beholding that which we ardently desire, but must not enjoy! Many a time was the marquis on the point of jumping out of the coach and paying the bet, for the blessed privilege of again pressing the earth with his feet. They were becoming benumbed for want of use. What a delight would it not have been to be permitted to change positions even with a beggar! Lonely and sad, woe-begone and dejected, he watched the goatherds walking with their flocks on the distant hills; the jocund muleteers, too, descending from their animals and walking for miles; nay, the herdsmen and tillers of the earth became to him objects of envy; and the life of a penny-postman had for him charms known probably to few who follow that vocation.

It was a day of religious festival and jubilee in the seven-hilled city. He turned away from it in disgust. But now half the journey was accomplished;—courage—it was left to him only to retrace, by another route, his way home, where, once arrived, his wager was gained, and the door of his prison would be opened. The classic ground so memorable in ancient story—the towers of other times—the renowned lake (Thrasymenè) where an earthquake was unheeded in the madness of mankind;—these were all in turn passed by with scarce a thought. Moody and melancholy, the poor marquis grew worse from day to day; his feet seemed less able to support him than formerly; a benumbing sensation had spread over all the muscles of both legs, and, although he had now but little use for them, yet even the little that he had was associated with extreme debility. He is now within three days' ride of his own palace-gate, but he sits up very little to-day, and is compelled to support himself with a stick. Placing his food as near at hand as possible, for the last two days he is obliged to keep entirely to his couch, the weakness of his limbs being so great as to prevent him from standing upright. The time goes on—the gates of the fair city of Florence are at hand—the whip cracks—the wheels rattle—the horses fly—the marquis is at the portal of his palace. Welcomed by his friends, the coach-prison door is opened, and the poor nobleman is lifted out, incapable of standing on the ground, a perfect and confirmed cripple.

And now is the marquis visited by his condoling friends, and the first medical skill that Florence can furnish is summoned to his aid. Doctors disagree. One calls it palsy, another says it is gout, a third declares it is loss of nervous power; they each, in turn, pursue their own plan of treatment, and, after months of attendance, leave the patient no better than

they found him. Other skill is sought. Padua, renowned for its university, spares its most learned professor of the healing art; he shakes his head most gravely, and declares that the first doctors had mistaken the disease. He consults the authorities, for he is a learned, a very learned man;—Hippocrates, Celsus, Galen, and Avicenna are examined, and bring their ancient wisdom to bear upon the case. The complaint is, to our professor, made most clear—it is obstruction in the venous circulation. Avicenna is copious on the case, and the marquis and his friends are filled with hope. The course of treatment is entirely changed. Rubefacients and blisters, and irritating plasters; medicines, too, to enlarge the size of the veins, and others to make thin the blood on its return to the heart. O, learned man! pursue thy plan of treatment—but what is the result? Thy views, derived from the wisdom of the ancients, are still the same; thy fee is princely—but the poor patient remains unchanged. Bologna is a school of medicine famous in the annals of the world; many of the princes, and potentates, and mighty men of all nations here seek for their physicians, and from hence are they now summoned to the sick man's bedside. Grave-looking men, in the costume of the learned, look wise upon the feeble and now emaciated limbs, and pronounce the malady to be Neuralgia. Ah! why had not the others found it out? Again hope visits the lame man, and his friends gain courage and rejoice. New plans of cure are adopted; time and treatment both go on, and with the same results. The wisdom of Bologna is as nought; and then homœopathic and hydropathic wonders are announced in the world, and these, too, are tried—nay, medicines from "farthest Ind;" and the practice of the Hindoos and the doctors of Malabar, with that of medicine-men of savage tribes, with the hope-inspiring fallacies of shampooing, mesmerism, acupuncturation, vapour-bathing, and electricity, were all in vain—and, exhausted with farther useless attempts at cure, the marquis yields himself to his fate; and he, who of old could outstrip the fleetest runner at the race, and ever shone most active and graceful in the dance, was now a crippled man for life.

Of the party of gentlemen who became the immediate successors to the comfortably-arranged carriage of the marquis, and with whom our tale commences, one was a physician of good repute, a medical graduate of the Universities of Edinburgh and Gottingen. Fresh from the schools of Germany, where everything that is wild and mysterious in medicine as well as metaphysics generally originates, the mind of Dr. Fontellet, highly enthusiastic in all his pursuits, yet tempered with a becoming share of caution to regulate his investigations, had of late become strongly impressed in favour of a new doctrine in medicine known by the name of Isopathy. As it is without doubt destined to rank with other received and established systems, we cannot better describe it than it has already been done in one of the very late numbers of the best English medical journals from which we quote.

ISOPATHY.

"Another system of medicine has made its appearance in Germany, and is now becoming known under the name of Isopathy. A Doctor Hermann is the Hahnemann or Priessnitz of the new system, which derives its name from the doctrine that the disease of any organ is to be cured medicinally by the use of the analogous organ of some healthy

animal. Thus, in disease of the liver, the healthy liver of some domestic animal, under certain modifications, is prescribed. As it might not be convenient to prescribe the substance of the organ, Dr. Hermann professes to make tinctures thereof, and thus to exhibit concentrated essences. Like all new doctrines, it has made a certain number of converts, who designate themselves Isopathists. It is also reported that many radical cures have already been effected by this system."

Of the truth and efficacy of the doctrines of this system over all others Dr. Fontellet was most devotedly assured. His experiments had been conducted in concert with Dr. Carl Von Hermann, a man of acute intellect and unprejudiced research. That it should meet with foes and opponents in the members of the regular faculty, is not at all to be wondered at. With them, every departure from their own established opinions becomes at once professional heresy, and, in the language of the story, "their doxy is orthodoxy, while every other doxy is heterodoxy." The mighty truth of the circulation of the blood was received with derision by the regular physicians of the time, and it is no difficult task for learned blockheads to sneer at discovery or innovation in an art so purely conjectural, that it has been described as "putting medicines of which we know little into a body of which we know less."

But, alas! for poor human knowledge! how faithfully does it verify the saying of the wisest of mankind, that "there is nothing new under the sun?" Isopathy is of very ancient date; nay, of an age long before the organisation of schools of medicine or societies of surgeons. Celsus speaks of the udder of the cow taken warm from the animal as a remedy in quinsy. It is an aphorism of Hippocrates that the blood of a healthy young calf is good in wasting away of the body;—(Marasmus) and of a more modern age the learned anatomist Vesalius, whose excellent work is an authority on the transfusion of the blood—which by-the-bye, is itself an approach to Isopathy—cites case upon case where, to wrap a patient in the hot hide of a young calf just severed from the body wrought wonderful cures in Hysteria and nervous affections. In a medical work as late as the year 1669, a recipe is extant for "Fittes and Wormes," which tells us "to rip up ye bellye of a lyve hen and clap it on ye stomacke."

Satisfied in his own opinion that the disease of the marquis (intelligence of which had reached him) was one to be met and successfully combated by the Isopathic treatment, Dr. Fontellet lost no time in being introduced to him, and on explaining the happy results of some previous hopeless cases by the new system, he was at once permitted to undertake the charge of the marquis; and the doctor's friend and patron, Hermann, its founder, was summoned from the University of Gottingen, of which he was one of its most distinguished professors, to assist him in the task. The treatment was at once commenced; but we will spare the reader the prolixity of its detail, yet the truth must be told. Isopathy, with all its powers and charms of novelty, was to the poor sufferer valueless as all that had gone before. Although the enthusiasm of Dr. Fontellet met with a severe check where he had hoped for triumph, still his confidence in the new system was of course in nowise diminished by a single failure, and that, too, in a chronic disease that had already defied all surgery. Besides, it should have been mentioned that the Isopathists insist that, to the success of their system, it is indispensable that they shall have the first treatment of the patient. They contend that their mode is a natural one;—that after the human body has been changed by a course of medicines which

they do not approve or use, natural Isopathy cannot be expected to meet cases where the body, by improper medication, is in a state opposed to nature; and from this time it has become an established axiom to undertake no case except from its commencement.

At this time, for some reasons of domestic policy, the marquis proposed to pass the ensuing winter at Pisa—the air being milder, and better suited to his invalid habits than that of Florence. He forthwith removed to a family mansion, situated on the Lung d'Arno, the principal street overlooking the river in that neglected but most beautiful city of palaces. Among the astonishing things connected with our humanity, none are more so than the principle of accommodation in the mind to the peculiar circumstances of the body. The young man, whose chief delight is in books, is suddenly stricken blind; another, whose happiness is in the chase, becomes a cripple; yet "that wisdom which is from above tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb," and the blind man is merry, and the lame for life forgetteth his privation. So it at length became with the marquis;—habit had familiarised him with his condition; he despaired of cure, and he enjoyed the society of his friends; found sweet counsel in books, and was a cheerful—nay, a merry man.

It happened that upon the near approach of the celebration of the triennial festival of Santa Ranieri, the patron saint of Pisa, that unusual numbers of all classes of mankind resort to that once far-famed city, to witness the pageantry and gaiety that on this occasion ever abounds. The rich and noble, with their splendid retinues—tradespeople with their various crafts—orators to plead, and improvisatrice to delight—artisans, too, in their various callings—painters, poets, players, jongleurs, and charlatans—nay, every description of human occupation pours its tide of population into Pisa; and amongst them all, and not few in number, are Los Zingaros, or Zincali, descendants of the ancient Bohemian race of gipsies, whose antiquity is by many writers traced from Egypt, and whose migrations are over all the world. The particular race of which we now speak were the Gitanos, or gipsies of Spain—a remarkable people in many respects, and, though hunted down with fire and sword by Philip V. of Spain, yet in that country at least their numbers have not decreased;—though more wandering and unsettled in their habits, and equally dissolute in their morals, as those that a few years past used to perambulate the villages of England—the women telling fortunes, while the men and boys followed the calling of tinkers and braziers, and were, in truth, petty-larceny knaves, robbing gardens of fruit, the hedges of linen left to dry, and ever levying heavy contributions on the duck-ponds and hen-roosts—yet were the race of which we now speak capable of the exercise of higher arts and more useful callings, and none among them were held in so great repute as their skill in the healing art,—especially, too, in obstinate and lingering complaints that had defied the regular faculty. So celebrated have some of these become, that in dangerous cases their aid has been summoned to the healing of princes. Ferdinand III., Emperor of Germany, is said to have been cured of an internal complaint by the skilful administration of one Gitano Gosorro, a reputed sorceress of the gipsy tribe, whose knowledge of herbs and roots was said to surpass every botanist of the age. This lawless people, though occupying at present only the most insignificant position in society, were at one time a haughty and proud race; and so late as the year 1699, a deputation from them to the King of Bavaria, complaining

of certain wrongs, was entertained, and their grievances relieved. At this time their form of government was an established one; and, if not recognised, it was in many respects less barbarous than many with which it was cotemporary.

Despairing of ever again being restored to the blessed privilege of the use of his limbs, the marquis had for some time abandoned all attempts at a cure, and it was only on hearing certain medical wonders reported to have been performed by a gitana of the name of Chincerana, then at Florence (one of which was a remarkable cure wrought on his maternal aunt), that the curiosity of the marquis was awakened, and visions of hope floated again around the lame man's couch. It has somewhere been said, that consulting a quack is like having a ticket in the lottery—it may draw a prize. It was precisely this vague kind of feeling that, after much deliberation, determined the marquis to consult the gitana, although it was clearly proven that she was no quack, but had attended the lectures on medicine delivered at the University of Munich, and had been somewhat regularly educated to the profession she practised. Accompanied by her mother, an old matron of the tribe, Chincerana waited upon the invalid. Scarcely past twenty years of age, the commanding beauty of this superior woman attracted universal attention and respect. Dignified in her manners, and of a style of beauty truly Italian, there was that expression of elevated intellect beaming in the countenance that could rebuke all frivolity with a single glance, and at once inspired confidence in the beholder. There are certain faces that, when we meet for the first time, produce a sentiment of respect never to be forgotten; and of such was the face of the gitana. At great length, and with much judgment, she, with her mother, examined the case of the marquis. They spake but few words together, and these were in the language of their tribe. After a few minutes of apparent deep reflection, she spoke.

"Son of the noble, thy limbs may be restored. On one condition I promise thee a cure;—the gitana hath spoken, and she never falsifies."

"I believe thee from the bottom of my heart," the marquis replied. "Truth is in thy manner, and my hopes are roused—but name the condition."

"An operation."

"An operation!" and the marquis shuddered. "Of what nature, pray?"

"Trifling. Put thy trust in the gitana, who never deceives. Fearest thou the sight of a little blood? Remember what is at stake. Dost thou consent?"

"But tell me more. The operation—who will perform it? and—"

"Myself;—alone and unassisted. Ask me no more; my time is precious."

"Well, I consent. When?"

"On the eighth day from the present, at noon, the gitana will redeem her promise. Son of the noble, thou shalt be healed. In the interim, obey me in all things."

"Faithfully do I promise."

And with an air of humble yet dignified decision, accompanied by her mother, Chincerana left the apartment.

That the feelings of the marquis after this interview were of a peculiar nature, no one can doubt. What!—is it possible that an humble

gipsy-girl can affect a cure that the most learned professors of the healing art have essayed in vain? was the query constantly uppermost in his mind. By the confidence of the gitana his own courage was stimulated; yet was he determined to know the nature of the operation before he yielded to it, and he was equally resolved that some of his friends should be present at the time. Many members of the faculty of medicine at Florence, most of whom had heard of the gipsy promise, formally waited upon the marquis, urging him not to consent to the proposed operation, assured, as they professed to be, that it was a piece of charlatanirie unworthy of his regard; but the word of the marquis was pledged, and he would abide the issue. During the week the gitana sent a few vegetables, to be used as fomentations, some internal medicines also, and very particular directions as to diet, all written in very choice Italian, and in a character singularly beautiful and correct. The eighth day at last arrived—the day of mighty import to the hero of our tale. He was quite prepared, yet was there a slight degree of excitement in his manner, not at all unnatural at the time. Three of his near kinsmen, too, were with him, all of whom essayed, by every art and argument, to wean him from his purpose. One, especially, declared him nothing short of an insane man to listen to the wild gipsy hag, as he called her; and, as the time approached, indulged the hope that she would not appear, and thus at once acknowledge herself incapable of performing what she had promised, and to be the impostor that he believed and hoped her to be.

But, lo! the eighth day has come—the hand is upon the dial—it is now broad noon; and, at the very striking, the gitana is there. She salutes no one as she enters, but walks across the *salon* to disrobe herself.

"Most devilish handsome and commanding, upon my faith!" says the doubtful kinsman to his friend, in an under tone.

The gitana heard, and turned upon him a look of utter scorn.

"This is no time for ribaldry, vain man;—till thou art silent, the gitana stirs not."

Apologies were offered, and peace restored. The gitana opened the door, and her mother entered. The marquis, much disconcerted by his kinsman's rudeness, at length broke the silence.

"Pardon me," he said, "and be not offended that I ask of you the nature and extent of the operation which I am to undergo."

"Most willingly will I explain," she replied. "Listen. Stagnation in the principle of life—the blood in thy veins—is the malady under which you now languish. Vesalius, the most learned of anatomists, restored the palsied limb; the withered arm was raised; nay, the imbecile prince was restored to intellect and reason by that mighty operation—transfusion of the blood. Thy blood, oh noble! is sluggish as the standing pool: thy nerves, by sympathy, refuse their influence on the motive organs; and hence is thy complaint. The dark corrupted current of life that now so feebly flows I will replace with the blood of youth; and thy powerless limbs shall again be as they were in thy prime of boyhood. Are you prepared?"

"I am."

The gitana rang a bell; and two servants, bearing a large and apparently heavy box, entered the apartment; on removing the cover, his

slender limbs bound with cords, there lay a young and most beautiful deer.

"Behold! the blood of the swift, the pure, and the healthy, shall be thine."

The gitana then bound a silken bandage round the left left leg of the patient, and, with a spring lancet, made a longitudinal incision in one of the large external veins of the leg; the black, thick blood flowed slowly and heavily. The gitana watched it attentively, and exclaimed—

"No motion can exist in organs where blood is like to that."

After taking away about twelve ounces, the bandage was unloosed, the bleeding ceased, and the mother, acting as assistant, pinched the aperture in the vein firmly with her thumb and finger, so as to exclude the entrance of the slightest particle of air; her daughter motioned, and the servants brought the deer, still bound, and held it near to the feet of the marquis. The operator then, taking in her hand an instrument like a very large cupping-glass, having a hollow flexible tube passing from its bottom, about four or five inches in length, and terminating in a silver tube; this tube was placed in the incision made in the leg of the patient, and at the same instant the cupping-glass end, the air being exhausted, was placed over an incision previously made with the spring lancet in the principal artery in the deer's neck. The bright, light-coloured fluid poured into the cupping-glass in abundance, while its passage was facilitated by gently pressing the flexible tube, and thus the arterial blood of the young deer was poured into the already emptied vein of the marquis. From twelve to sixteen ounces was thus injected—the deer was removed—the tube taken from the opening in the vein of the marquis—a light dressing was placed upon it, and the patient, who was now slightly faint, was placed upon the bed by his valet. The gitana ordered the room to be darkened, and enjoined the most profound silence. The marquis had fallen into a deep sleep, and, from the perspiration standing in large drops over his whole body, the gitana predicted a most favourable result.

As the operation of transfusion of the blood from a healthy living animal to a human being is one that in former days occupied a high position in the annals of medicine, a few remarks in relation to it may be here not out of place. Although allusions to it are to be found in the Latin edition of Hippocrates' "De Morborum," yet it does not appear to have ever been practised among the Romans; and many centuries elapsed before we again find it mentioned by some of the earlier Italian anatomists. Eustachius mentions it as having been attended with success in impaired motions of the limbs; and a Swedish anatomist, Ob. Rudbec, is profuse in its praise in nervous and many unknown maladies pertaining to the limbs. At this period, 1550, the wandering mountebanks and charlatans were in the habit of performing it; and at about the same time we read of it as a common practice with the veterinary surgeons and jockies, who, by the sacrifice of a lamb or calf, gave renewed vigour to old and broken-down horses, and thereby increased their value when offered in the market. But not to take up too much time with useless inquiries, we find no well-attested record of cases until the time of Vesalius. With him it would seem to have been by no means a rare operation; and in the numerous cases that he cites, it appears to have been generally successful, especially in chronic rheumatism, para-

lysis, sciatica, epilepsy, convulsions, marasmus, consumptive complaints, and idiotcy. That there was some danger at times attending it, he was fully aware, and no doubt fatal results must have come within his knowledge; but of these little is said. It must be borne in mind that at this time the structure and diseases of the veins were unknown, as was also the circulation of the blood, and nothing approached the truth until Harvey's important discovery: he had been a pupil of Fabricius at Aquapendente, who, cotemporary with Vesalius, was also a strong advocate for transfusion. Subsequent experiments have explained the fatality that generally attends the introduction of the smallest particle of air into the veins, and it is without the least doubt that to this circumstance most of the fatal cases were to be referred. On this point we may observe that the gitana, in her operation, was exceedingly particular. Transfusion of the blood was formerly performed indiscriminately either upon the veins of the upper or lower extremities, and sometimes on those of the body. It is now a well-established fact, that those veins only most distant from the heart should be chosen for it, since the introduction of air is much more likely to take place in the veins near to the heart than in those at a distance. In the practice of a highly distinguished London physician, within a few months death ensued from the entrance of a particle of air into one of the small external veins of the throat, during the simple operation of passing a seton in the neck. An immense deal of learned and valueless discussion upon this subject has taken place in the schools, which it would here be out of place to recapitulate; but that it is a remedy of value in judicious hands is not to be doubted, although it seems for some time to have been neglected; but that with the revolution of fashion (to which even the laws of medicine are subject) it will be revived as something new, is more than probable, especially as the Isopathists claim it as one of the sheet-anchors by which their peculiar views are sustained.

We now return to the patient. The sleep into which he seemed to have been thrown by the influence of the operation he had undergone, continued for nearly five hours; on awaking, he complained of extreme thirst, which the gitana had anticipated, and had consequently prepared a drink of a decoction of marsh-mallows, made palatable to the taste, of which he partook most freely. He was perfectly composed in mind, and spoke of his sensations as peculiar and agreeable; he described them to be an unusual fulness about the region of the heart, accompanied with a thrilling sensation over all the body, and a feeling of bright excitement of both body and mind appeared to possess him. His valet now received instructions to make repeated frictions on the legs with a vegetable substance that she gave him, and enjoined him to take no food, but to drink freely of the decoction of mallows until her return.

The marquis continued in a state of pleasurable excitement; and after the friction to his limbs had been continued for some hours by his servant, what his astonishment and delight was, to find that he could move both of his feet with almost the same freedom as his hands, we must leave our readers to imagine, for we cannot describe it. A knock announced the gitana; she brought with her two linen cloths, covered with a species of red-coloured plaister, which were directed to be applied to the legs of her patient; gave him some powders, evidently vegetable, to be taken at intervals of three hours through the night, and forbad all food for the

present. She again took her leave, cautioning him not to speak, as he was about to express his sense of gratitude to her.

The sleep of the marquis was again most profound, and with the dawn the gitana was at his bedside. His thirst was unabated, and there was a slight flush upon either cheek. Carefully examining the condition of the circulation, she felt the pulse at the temporal and external carotid arteries, at the wrist also, and the heart itself. With an expression of some anxiety on her face she ordered his valet to fetch a basin, and immediately binding up his arm she opened a vein and took away about fourteen ounces of blood. She forbad all food, with the exception of panada and gruel, and again departed. At her next visit, in the afternoon, an expression of joy was in her face; the thirst of the marquis was gone—all his sensations were of the most agreeable kind—more—more than all, he moved his limbs! The gitana gently feeling the pulse at the wrist, exclaimed—

"Rise with to-morrow's dawn, O noble,—thou art healed by the gitana!"

And true to the gitana's promise, the marquis did rise with the dawn, and pressing the ground with his feet, he again put them forth in all their pristine power and strength.

Mighty and mysterious are thy ways, O divine Disposer of the universe! The humble gipsy girl has confounded the knowledge of the wise and the learned of the schools!

But what were the feelings of the marquis, and who shall describe them? Generous and noble in his nature, the overpowering emotions of gratitude and thankfulness were not to be expressed by words—they were too weak, too powerless for the occasion. How sincerely did he pour forth the thanks of a liberal heart; how truly did he desire that some immense reward, beyond mere money, were in his power. In fervent and heartfelt prayer did he return thanksgiving unto God, and invoke His blessing upon her, who, as his agent upon earth, had broken his bondage chains. How, then, in delight unknown before, did he walk, slowly and surely at first, and exclaim, "What! my limbs restored?—am I awake?—or is it all a dream?" Then bursting into laughter, he would sink down exhausted, and utter a prayer of thanksgiving for the mercy he had received.

To say that the marquis was liberal, is but poorly to express the extent of his bounty to her. Most anxious, too, did he become to wean her from her companions and from her unsettled and nomadic habits, and desire that, under the tuition of some of his numerous female relatives, she might become a member of their household, and learn the arts and accomplishments of civilised life, which she was so peculiarly fitted to dignify and adorn. Most kindly did he take pains to introduce the beautiful and intellectual gipsy-girl to many of her own sex, who, delighted with her numerous and unusual accomplishments, were proud to make her one of their number, and, as far as lay in their power, to teach her many of the duties that pertained to the sex.

To all proposals, however, she listened with a cold and inattentive ear; and the time of her sojourn at Florence being now at an end, she, with her mother, had began to make preparation for departure. The aunt of the marquis, whom we have already mentioned as having been essentially benefited by her skill, became extremely attentive, using every power

of persuasion to induce her to dwell under her roof and become her friend and companion.

"We will teach you," she said, "the polished accomplishments of life,—the languages, music, and the dance."

The gitana, suddenly starting, replied,

"Languages, say you? Oh, what language so pure as the Rommany talk—what music so sweet as its song?"

Then seizing a guitar, she broke into one of those wild and heart-inspiring dances, accompanied with such just cadence, and with a grace of attitude that might have shamed most dancing-masters of the day. Then breaking into the Romalis or gipsy-song, she poured forth such impassioned and soul-stirring strains as would have proved a fortune to a regular cantatrice. And addressing her companion,—"And what, I pray you, lady, is it you would teach me? Can you learn me to be more happy?—O no! Am I not content? Why wish to change me? Can you improve me in the shuttle or the distaff? or can you better learn me to weave the doublet of flax, fashion the cloak of Segovia wool, plait the hat of Asturian straw, or shape the sandal of the white kid's skin? I can strike the silvery salmon as he glides through the running stream by moonlight; I can tame the mountain *borrèco*, be he ever so wild; and, with my javelin, I dare confront the wild she-boar in her cave, though her whelps were at the teat. And more than that, I can make the philtre for the love-sick maiden that shall ever keep her lover true, for the gipsy-wife is never faithless to her *ro* (husband), and is not to be bought for silver or gold; and more than all, I know the art that prolongeth life, and can read the destiny of men in the stars."

To this the only reply that could be made was, that she was better fitted to embellish society, and become like others of her sex.

"What!" she replied, "would you make me like that?" pointing to a female passing by; "a parrot and a painted thing?—to torture my feet in shoes of leather,—pinch my body in stays of iron and whalebone, and with a cord squeeze my lungs to a diseased state,—twist my hair with pins of steel and combs of copper or horn, and circle my limbs with garters and girdles?—and, worse than all, crib me in the house of the Busné (European), where the mountain air cometh not? Never, most kind lady, can I become a thing for society, while the trees give me fruit, the vines grapes, the gardens pulse, the rivers fish, the fountains water, the mountains game;—no, no, while these things last, ask me not to lead a city life."

And away she bounded to join her tribe, by all of whom she was worshipped as a being of a superior order. The very next day, mounted upon her snow-white mule, and placed in the centre of her tribe, with them the place of honour, the gitana, bidding adieu to Florence, was on her route to Spain.

Our narrative is at an end: but Dr. Fontellet and his patron, Hermann, though somewhat chagrined at their own ill-success in the treatment of the marquis's complaint, yet hail it as a most signal triumph of the new doctrine of Isopathy; while on its being mentioned to the learned professors of the regular schools of Padua and Bologna, they simply shrugged up their shoulders, and, with an air of profound contempt, said that which, translated into our vernacular, would be, "Quackery! quackery!"

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Chapter IX.

Many were the inquiring glances cast at William Kay, as he stepped forth from his small, antique abode, in company with a young man whose cavalier air could not be disguised by his simple unpretending attire. He was not much above the middle height, and although very powerful in frame, yet this gave no shadow of clumsiness to his form. His elastic step, free and bold carriage, bespoke at once the vigour of youth, the habits of knightly exercises, and the consciousness of high birth; and there was not one of the many idlers who gazed after him in pure curiosity, but was as firmly convinced of the stranger's station in life as if the Golden Fleece had hung round his neck. His features were far from perfect; but the open brow, full lips, and blue eyes, betrayed so much youthful vivacity and ardour as to make ample amends for their irregularity.

They passed the marble front of the gorgeous Stadhuis, and the imposing church of Notre Dame, with its tower of dizzy height and beautiful design, in silence, now and then merely interrupted by a question on the part of the stranger which proved that he visited Antwerp for the first time.

They entered at length upon the Meerbrugge, and stopped in front of a stone house of large dimensions, quaintly adorned, according to the taste of the time, with bas-reliefs in cameo style and other figures, which was evidently the object of their walk.

"This, then," said the stranger, "is the house of this zealous patriot—this injured, and therefore resentful subject?"

"Not so loud, for our Lady's sake!" interrupted Kay, lowering his own voice almost to a whisper. "Please to remember he does not dwell alone; he is surrounded by his family; and it would, perhaps, be as well if you were to see them all."

"I thought his friends were about to depart for England, and that this circumstance left him free."

"He led me to understand this pretty clearly the last time we met," answered Kay, "or I should almost have dreaded to introduce him to your notice."

"Wherefore?"

"Because I cannot but be conscious that the aim of this day's visit may be the means of bringing the whole family into trouble at some future period; and though I know such a consideration would weigh nothing in the eyes of the elder Van Meeren, yet his younger brother, he whom I warned you not to initiate into your purposes, is also a friend of mine, and is, moreover, a husband and a father."

"Ha! yes,—the pretty daughter, I remember;" and the youth whistled, as he entered the house, the ritornello of a Spanish song.

When Kay demanded to speak to Paul on matters of business, he found that he was yet at the fabric, which was close at hand. There, he well

knew, privacy was impossible. He inquired if his room were free?—No,—Senhor Lopez Chievosa was hard at work within it. Turning to his companion, he muttered something about going up to the ladies, for the hour was near when the brothers Van Meeren would return, and it would, perhaps, be best to await them there. His companion gaily assented, and in a few minutes they were ushered into the apartment where Mistress van Meeren and her daughter were bent on their usual occupation.

As Kay entered the room, Margaret rose with a cheerful smile to greet him; but, checked by the presence of the stranger, she stopped short, and crimsoned with embarrassment.

"You must permit an old friend," said Kay, "to present to you a young traveller, a stranger in our town, the son of an ancient patron and benefactor of mine, to whom I am doing the honours of my pictures. As you well know, I have none at home in a fit state to be shown; and, as you possess so many, I was tempted to ask your permission to exhibit them. My friend will, I am sure, for my sake, be welcome among you."

Mistress van Meeren, who disliked nothing in the shape of novelty, received the stranger with much show of cordiality. At a look of her mother, Margaret disappeared, and presently re-entered the room, bearing in her hands a silver salver with wine and cakes; these she offered to the stranger, with a grace which, though untutored, was not the less winning. The youth looked at her for a moment with a bold, though not rude gaze, then partook freely of the refreshment; and the painful embarrassment that, at first, seemed to pervade Kay's usually frank manner, and the shyness of Margaret, gave way before the ease and sprightliness of his address. It was, at times, almost familiar and condescending in its tone; but never sufficiently so to offend: a frank, gay nature vented its mirthfulness at every turn, and his lively accounts of Brussels and its *fêtes*, and the divers places he had visited, in or out of the Low Countries, diverted, more from the manner in which they were given, than from the subjects themselves. Half an hour had not elapsed before the smiles of all were, occasionally, converted into merry peals of laughter, and a whole hour passed away like a minute, so unmarked was it in its course, when, attracted by the sound of merriment, Chievosa made his appearance at the door of the apartment.

His extraordinary personal beauty struck, perhaps, the young stranger; for he bestowed on him an examination so searching and prolonged, that Lopez felt the warm blood mount to his very temples. Far from resenting it, however, by look or manner, Margaret observed with surprise that he suffered his eyes to seek the ground, and that he stood abashed before a youth so much his junior.

Kay, also, closely marked the expression of Chievosa's countenance. He stood, whilst exposed to the gaze of the stranger, like a breathing statue; his chiselled features enabling him at will, and by the mere effect of repose, to banish all peculiar meaning from his countenance without impairing its grace; but when the stranger at length withdrew his stare, the young Spaniard raised his eyes, in his turn, towards him. He permitted them not to rest in that direction for more than a moment; but a smile curled his lip, slight, but so scornful that an apt and experienced reader of the human physiognomy could easily trace in it the bud of a new-born enmity, which, in a Spanish bosom, was but too likely to ripen

fast. Kay became restless and uncomfortable, to an extent which he could scarcely conceal.

"You are doubtless waiting for Master Paul van Meeren?" said Lopez, turning to him.

The remark was perfectly natural, for the artist seldom passed the house without seeing his friend, yet it caused in him an unusual degree of disquietude, and he answered with hasty trepidation—

"Oh, by no means; we came to see some pictures, my friend and myself—and——"

"I think I have seen your friend before," continued Chievosa.

"Indeed! I—I much doubt it," replied Kay, with increasing confusion.

"Where, pray, did you see me, fair sir?" asked the stranger, turning sharply round, and facing the Spaniard. "I shall be very much obliged if you will tell me."

It was Chievosa's turn to look embarrassed. For a second he remained silent, then replied, in a somewhat hesitating manner, he could not exactly remember.

"I might, perhaps, help your memory by a suggestion," said the youth, still confronting the Spaniard, who seemed willing to edge out of his vicinity.

"This gentleman's name is Arkel;—perhaps that will assist you."

"When and where have you met him?" demanded Mistress van Meeren, anxious to relieve the evident embarrassment of her favourite.

"Nay, upon reflection, I think I must be mistaken," replied Chievosa. "I have never heard that name, nor do I believe, now I observe this gentleman's face closer, that I ever beheld him before; and I do not imagine that he can be much more certain about mine."

"Indeed I am, though," said Arkel, laughing. "As for my name or face, I care not who knows either. Perhaps, however, senhor, this may not be your case."

An expression of anger flashed for an instant from the dark eyes of the Spaniard; but at that moment the door of the apartment opened, and the words which mounted to his lips were interrupted by the entrance of Paul and Cornelius. Their countenances expressed surprise at the sight of Arkel, so much at home amongst his new acquaintances; but, as a friend of Kay, he was welcomed by them in the most friendly manner, and immediately invited to partake of their hospitality. Paul, hearing that Arkel had never seen Antwerp before, offered to be his guide through the city, when Kay interrupted him, saying that the object of his friend's visit was not entirely one of pleasure, but rather connected with business, in a way that, he thought, might interest the Van Meerens, and that was the principal reason of his bringing him to their house.

"Surely, no fresh orders from the regent," said Cornelius. "It is but a few days since Van Orlay brought us the most important we have had for many years."

"Not from the Princess of Parma," said Arkel, with a smile; "but yet, I may say you are in luck, for I have brought a commission for you from a person little inferior to herself, and whose orders may prove still more munificent."

Cornelius looked pleased—Paul, puzzled; and, with his natural straight-

forwardness, he inquired if Master Arkel did not follow the profession of Kay.

"Certainly no successful rival, at any rate," answered Arkel, with a laugh.

This reply was not perfectly satisfactory, but Paul's sense of propriety prevented his insisting further.

"Well," he said, after a moment's pause, "as your stay is to be but brief, had we not better take the earliest opportunity of talking over the business that brings you here? No better time than the present. Pass with me to my office. Kay and Cornelius will join us, if they please."

"Oh! you'll do very well without me," said the latter; "I am fatigued already; but at dinner, which will soon be served, I hope we shall all meet."

A blush spread over the stranger's ingenuous countenance. Margaret, pitying his sudden, and until then not very manifest, bashfulness, insisted on the hospitable invitation of her parents with a look, smile, and tone that she was accustomed to bestow upon, and to see received by, her friends as a favour: great was, therefore, her surprise, and no less her mortification, when her gracious advances were met by a cold stare of astonishment, that absolutely froze the words on her lip, and carried to her feminine sensitiveness the conviction of having been guilty of some gross impropriety, but in what respect she could by no means discover. Her usually soft, hazel eyes flashed with a momentary expression of anger, which brought to light on her countenance a dormant resemblance to that of Paul, which its blandness ordinarily concealed. It was as well, perhaps, for Chievosa's chance of obtaining the prize he so much coveted, that she saw not the peculiar smile that curled his lip as he marked the stranger's movement.

Paul led the way, followed by Arkel and Kay, the former being utterly unconscious, or regardless, of the effect produced by his rudeness. The eyes of Chievosa followed them, as they disappeared through the door, with an anxious expression, which Margaret construed into an inclination to retire with them; nor did this tend to soothe her wounded vanity. As they pursued their way to the small room set apart for all consultations relating to business, Kay found means, unheard by Paul, to whisper in the stranger's ear—

"Do not, I entreat, my lord, forget that you would thrust yourself on this adventure, and that, for a time, Arkel must forget the pride which the Lord of Arkel may feel. If you cannot do this, it was indeed a rash and useless enterprise to come here."

"I'll try," said the youth; "but you do not know how new and odd some things seem—how they grate on the unaccustomed ear."

"They would not, perhaps, appear so strange," answered Kay, "if, in mixing with your inferiors, you could, through the power of imagination, decorate them with other names for the nonce; you would probably find yourself less startled by approaches to familiarity, if you could but fancy them justifiable."

They now followed Paul into the small apartment, who carefully closed the door behind them.

"Are you sure Chievosa will not join us here?" said Kay, cautiously looking round, to assure himself that none besides themselves were near.

"I think not," said Paul. "Unreproved he certainly would not. It is true, he has been of late strangely indulged in this house, and takes liberties accordingly. But does the matter on hand require so much caution?"

"More than you are aware of," replied Kay.

"Why not lock the door?" said Arkel, impatiently; "would not that be the simplest way of shutting out intruders?"

"It is unnecessary," answered Paul, somewhat coolly. "Perhaps, after all, my brother may wish to enter. If we do not talk too loud, and remain at the further end of the room, we shall not run much risk of being overheard. Pray, what would you of me?"

It did not escape Kay's notice that his friend looked graver and sadder than usual, and that there was something, amounting to despondency, in his whole manner very foreign to his nature.

"I am almost afraid," he said, looking kindly at him, "our visit and its secret purpose may not be well timed, Paul."

"If it be of the nature I begin to suspect," answered Van Meeren, "none could be better chosen. I am out of spirits, and want something to rouse me."

"What can be more calculated to produce that effect than the consideration of the miseries of this unhappy country?" said Arkel.

"True," answered Paul, sadly; "but of what avail is the patriot's sorrow? He stands alone and unsupported, in the midst of the cautious and the fearful: what avails one individual arm—one individual opinion?"

"Much, in a determined, influential man, such as you have been described to me, sir," said the youth, warmly; "and such as I can easily conceive you to be."

"He is all that you could desire in a confidant to your wild schemes," said Kay; "and you, Paul, can implicitly trust this gentleman; the errand on which he is bent will, I am sure, meet your most fervent wishes half way; and you will be far more willing to enter into his views and further his object than I am."

"Perhaps," said Paul—"it must depend, however, on the nature of both. Although I am afraid," he added, with a slight smile, "that I am more easily led away in such matters than you, my good friend."

"Because you cannot, like me, fly from painful realities to an ideal world of your own creation; and although the relief be but an anodyne at best, it is more powerful than you, perhaps, imagine. But with regard to this gentleman's object——"

"By your leave," interrupted Arkel, "I will myself disclose it;" and turning to Paul, he continued, "I came to Antwerp solely for the purpose of ascertaining how the feelings of the good citizens stand towards those who have infringed its liberties and destroyed its peace, and who, if allowed to persevere in their present course, will ultimately reduce its splendour to a legend, for future ages to wonder at, and perhaps altogether disbelieve; and I came to this house with the hope of inducing its master to entrust me with the secret of his own sentiments on this subject."

"I make no mystery of them," said Paul; "on the contrary, I am proud to declare how strong has ever been within me the hatred of all injustice, tyranny, and oppression—how willingly I would sacrifice all I possess—nay, life itself, to free my country from the Spanish yoke! I should long since have acted up to my principles, had not family considerations been a

check upon me; but the time has at length arrived when even those must yield. You see, sir, I am frank with you."

"Certainly," said the stranger, "and you shall find me as unreserved as the sentiments you have just expressed deserve. I am here, for the present, under false colours; because, not acting with my father's consent or even knowledge, it would little beseem me to commit him by any deeds of mine, which he may not, and perhaps never will, be induced to countenance. Therefore do I wish to conceal my name and rank, though willing to peril all else in the cause."

"But although this avowal," said Paul, "makes the rank of my noble guest, and the necessity for its concealment, evident to me, and though the similarity of our feelings on a most important object is manifest, still the aim of——"

"It is this," said the youth, "there are others besides ourselves who feel, and are ready to act, like men. Thank God our country throngs with such. They are to be found in all places. The stronghold of the noble, the humble roof of the cottager, alike shelter true Flemings, not unmindful of the wrongs inflicted upon them by the proud Spaniards, and who will not sit quietly by and see oppressors wring their honours from those who boast them, and their wealth from those who have toiled to earn it; oppressors who, if unmolested in their career, will leave to future generations nought of what their fathers once possessed, but the fetters that galled them. All begin to feel that resistance is unavoidable, unless the Netherlands be content to fall, like the New World, a helpless sacrifice to the insatiate cupidity of the Spaniards. This state of things cannot endure, nor be permitted to endure. Many who have felt the yoke to be no longer bearable, have at last owned their feelings to each other, and their determination to throw it off."

"In short," said Paul, with a smile, "they have formed a conspiracy."

The colour mounted to the very temples of the young stranger.

"Nay," said he, warmly, "one cannot justly cast that name——"

"It signifies but little, my lord," answered Paul. "Why should men start at a mere word who do not tremble before the deed? Words, in general, weigh but little with me. Pray proceed."

"Well, then, many have united to canvass the means by which this unhappy land may be freed from the grievances which oppress it. The best, the most efficient, will ever be union amongst the aggrieved. A strong body, must be formed willing to avow publicly, and to support, even with the sword if necessary, the just representations which both wisdom and necessity compel us to make. Such a body may be said, in a great measure, to exist. High and noble names, riches and honesty, able heads, eloquent speakers, bold and powerful spirits are to be found amongst its members; but this is not sufficient. This body must augment in a tenfold degree if we may hope to defend the liberties of our cities. But how shall we effect this, when we do not even know if their inhabitants can feel, or would resent their wrongs."

"Can that be doubted?" said Paul, vehemently. "Can the burghers remain peaceful, when their peace is destroyed? When the prosperity of the towns is threatened with an overwhelming and final blow, can the townsmen be blind? No, my lord, they cannot. Many amongst us are Protestants; sincerely attached to a creed that seems most fitted to our form of legislature, and to our dispositions. Perfect freedom, religious

tolerance, is as necessary to our prosperity as to our happiness. If the tenets of distant and foreign traders be questioned and punished, as they have been of late years, they will all follow those who have already fled the land, whose privileges first attracted them. Other towns, more fortunate—other princes, more wise, will profit by our fall. This is a subject of general alarm. The question of the Inquisition is execrated by the whole city. The most stanch Catholics are indignant to see those who, though they deem them on the path of error, are still brothers in faith, inasmuch as they are Christians, treated like Panim dogs and infidels. The citizens cannot behold their friends and the most respectable townsmen delivered over to the flames and the rack, their riches confiscated and their families ruined, with the same coolness as the Spaniards view the destruction of the unfortunate Saracens, against whom national hatred and rivalry have steeled their hearts. The late public executions have produced most serious riots."

"These will be satisfactory tidings to those who have sent me," said Arkel. "My mission, however, was not solely to gather something of the general feeling prevailing through the town, but also to see certain individuals marked down for me on this list, and to sift their private opinions; to see, in short, whom we can trust, upon whom reckon in time of need, and whom boldly claim as wholly ours. I have not yet called upon one of the many patrician families I was to seek out, nor taken any steps whatever, for I will confess that Kay, whom from ancient friendship I first visited, made me such serious representations on the line of conduct I was pursuing with regard to my family, that he has somewhat damped my ardour, and stopped me at the very outset. He assured me that no disguise can avail to conceal my person nor my real rank if I am much seen here, more especially from the patricians. Perhaps he is right. At any rate, my ties as a son are as sacred as those that bind me to my country. I cannot proceed so boldly as, in my first burst of enthusiasm, I had imagined. But I came here thinking that you, unfettered as you are, would perhaps take some part of my task upon yourself. Your greater experience and your weight in this town must, if you are willing to perform it, enable you to act far more successfully than I could."

Paul bowed gravely, and seemed deeply interested. "I think," said he, on perceiving that Arkel was waiting for an answer, "I think I understand you. One consideration set aside, which a few hours will and must decide, I will gladly undertake to perform everything that can possibly rest with me. But surely, Kay, it was not patriotic thus to damp an ardent mind."

"I owe a deep debt of gratitude to this noble lord's illustrious father," said Kay, "and could I have succeeded, by my weak voice, in warning off from the path of danger one of his noble scions, I should have felt proud in having fulfilled a duty. No public or general motive can, or ever will, counterbalance private duties and feelings in my bosom. But surely, Paul, you can effect, without great personal risk, much that the young nobleman ought not to attempt?"

"With regard to the patricians, I can do but little," answered Van Meeren. "But as to those of my own standing, I can easily gather and make sure of their opinions. I can even influence them. Money I have in plenty, and am ready to peril both life and means in the just cause I embrace; but you must instruct me how to make both useful, and also

initiate me into greater details about the association you have mentioned. Not only for my own satisfaction, but for that of others, it will be absolutely necessary."

"That is done in few words," said Arkel; "we are already several hundred strong,—most of us nobles and gentlemen of the provinces. A solemn vow binds us to oppose to the last the establishing of the Inquisition, and to perish rather than yield."

"But are there not engaged herein more sons than fathers?" said Paul, with a meaning smile."

"The fathers, perhaps, will be forced before long into the course their sons have embraced. The boldness of youth will tear the veil from the cautiousness of age," said Arkel. "Hark, in your ear—Brederode is one of us, and many higher and nobler yet are in the background, believe me, watchful, as cats after their prey, to seize the opportunity which we will ere long afford them. I will not name those whom I merely suspect; but, assuredly, time will show that my words are true, though they may appear to you so lightly spoken."

"Brederode,—ha!" replied Paul, thoughtfully; "are there no other names, sir, with which you dare entrust me?"

"If you take the oath, I will give you the list. I repeat, I merely stand under a feigned name, and many others likewise; but I will give you the key. You will find many gentlemen of my father's household, and that of other princes, written down. But more must be bought over —those whose names may be worth something, though their profligate folly have reduced them to paupers,—you understand? They must be gained by that which we most lack—money. The cause is a just one, and justice must eventually triumph."

"With me, my lord," said Paul, "the feelings that actuate you are all-sufficient; but I am afraid that, to influence others, I shall want more ample details."

"Once fairly ours, they shall all be given," replied the youth; "but when shall that be? for I cannot linger here, and we are sadly in need of an able, trusty, and generous agent; all this, I am sure, we shall find in you."

"I hesitate not as to the line of conduct I shall eventually follow," replied Paul; "but I, too, have private feelings—private considerations. To secure my family from the possible, nay, probable, consequences of the bold step I am about to take, must be my first care. I can give you no decided answer until to-night, after the evening bell has sounded, when I can go to Kay and ——"

"Nay," said Arkel, laughing, "Kay would not agree to that; the very word treason makes his blood grow cold, and his hair stand on end —and I would not involve him." These last words were spoken in a tone too decided to allow of further discussion on that point.

"Here we cannot meet," said Paul, evidently not much pleased with the manner in which the young nobleman had last spoken; "your safety as well as mine forbids it."

Arkel immediately perceived the unfavourable impression he had produced; and as Paul's individuality was one highly calculated to please his youthful and enthusiastic mind, it was his first care to check the natural hauteur which his frankness rendered it difficult to conceal, and which was, at least, never put on to wound.

"Then," said he, with suavity which sat the more gracefully upon him that it was not a mere matter of form, "will you please to attend me at my lodgings, and take your evening cup with me? My inn is hard by, and it will not put you much out of your way. I will not ask you to join us, my good Kay, for, I repeat, I am most anxious to bring no trouble upon you. And in the mean time," added he, with a bland smile, seeing that Paul had not answered his invitation as readily as he had anticipated, "I hope you will permit me to partake of the hospitality which you and yours have so freely proffered?"

"I scarcely know how to answer you. What I have just heard has greatly altered circumstances. I shall certainly have the honour to wait on you; but I do not know if it would be prudent for you to be seen again in our family circle. I am afraid you have appeared there once too often."

"Nay," said Kay; "I thought it would excite less suspicion, and therefore answer better our purpose of concealment, to bring my lord openly into your house; and I would still advise you to adhere to this plan, more especially as it has been already adopted."

"Perhaps," said Paul. "But I mistrust Chievosa, and there is no chance of getting him out of the way, even for an hour."

"That is certainly unfortunate," said Kay. "Can it be true that he has ever met you before?"

"I believe I have, elsewhere, seen that remarkable young Spaniard—his person is too striking to be easily forgotten—but when or where I cannot recollect; perhaps his memory has not been more tenacious."

"God grant it may be so!" exclaimed Kay.

As Arkel moved towards the door, his two companions respectfully stood back to let him take the lead, and, in so doing, they had time to exchange a hurried whisper.

"His name?" said Paul. "Quick, Kay—his name?"

The answer wrought like a spell on Paul's countenance. All coldness, all despondency, vanished in an instant.

"Then," said he, "all doubts are at an end; with a joyful heart will I take any oath that binds me to a party which boasts *that* name among its leaders."

Whether he was prompted by youthful caprice, or dread of the weariness and ennui which he might experience at his Gasthuis, or whether he was influenced by more serious motives, it were hard to tell; but Arkel took the way which led to the apartments of the family. No trace of pride was now visible in his deportment, although he by no means talked so freely as he had done when alone with Mistress van Meeren and her daughter. He seemed more willing to listen than to speak; and his eyes often wandered from Chievosa to Margaret with a look of some curiosity and interest.

The meal which followed was a silent one; for the state of private, as well as public, affairs, had banished from the domestic circle of the Van Meerens, as, indeed, from most of those in Antwerp, all that freedom in the interchange of thoughts which had once given such charm to their fireside. All this had been over for some time; and that the presence of a stranger should add to this constraint was natural enough; still it seemed, to Margaret, that she had never seen Chievosa so abstracted, Kay so restless and unlike himself, and her uncle so moody.

Gradually a sense of embarrassment stole over them all. The young stranger alone seemed perfectly at his ease, and, though somewhat more reserved, as cheerful to the full as in the morning. Margaret had decided on showing him that she, too, possessed the secret of cold looks; but an unnameable something, an inward consciousness, told her that in this case they would be totally thrown away; and, involuntarily, under the influence of his own manner, she remained natural and graceful. From a feeling of coquetry or modesty, she could not perhaps herself have defined which, she scarcely appeared conscious of the existence of Chievosa. Never had he been so completely overlooked by her; yet she did not court the stranger's attention, but remained as calm and placid under his observant eye as if told by a secret voice from within how much this behaviour was likely to enhance her merits.

When the repast was over, Kay drew the attention of all to the pictures in the house, most of which were by his own hand. He lost himself in long dissertations about his art and his own achievements, which seemed the more strange to Margaret as it was not in accordance with his ordinary manner. He then produced the volumes illumined by Margaret for Arkel's inspection, perhaps not much to her displeasure. He talked incessantly; and being at length fairly tired out, he entreated Chievosa to sing one of his Spanish songs, which he was sure, he said, would delight his friend.

Chievosa hesitated not an instant. Taking his guitar from the wall, he placed himself in a part of the room where the light fell full upon his fine countenance, and having tuned the chords, preluded for some time upon his instrument.

"How could you think of inflicting upon me this odious Spanish twanging," said Arkel, in the ear of Kay, as he took his seat beside him on the bench which ran round the room, and was furnished with velvet cushions from space to space, for the convenience of the sitters.

"Anything," replied Kay, "to withdraw attention from yourself."

But the strumming of that most indifferent of musical instruments soon ceased, and Chievosa began a Spanish ballad, the music and words of which were believed to be his own composition; and the very first notes of his deep full voice, changed the expression of listlessness which the countenance of Arkel had assumed, to one of pleased attention.

The poetry was in itself very graceful. The sweet starry nights of a southern clime—the atmosphere redolent with the perfume of flowers—the brilliantly lighted halls of the noble—the gay, voluptuous dances of the peasantry, the peculiar features of his native land, were well set forth, interwoven with a fragmentary legend, not without some portion of wild interest. The movement and character of the melody varied with the diverse objects brought thus vividly to the imagination. Now it was soft and low—then loud and gay; here retarded—there accelerated, as the pathos of the poetry required. The voice of the singer, although deep, had so sweet an intonation that it found its way to the heart. Its peculiar charm left it in none of its notes. Rich as were the lower, the higher fell soft and clear, like those of a woman, on the entranced ear. Great, indeed, must have been the merits both of the singer and the song to make it acceptable to the listeners, to whom its theme must have been, to say the least, distasteful. Yet, when Chievosa ceased, a long pause ensued, during which it seemed to the delighted audience as if some spell was dissolved.

Arkel had suffered the music to lull him into that sort of vague, indefinite state of enjoyment, from which it is almost pain to be roused. It was Margaret who awoke him at length from his reverie. A few words addressed by her to Chievosa, in a low tone, and in Spanish—a language which he well understood—attracted his attention. They expressed the pleasure the music had given her, and the desire she felt to have it continued. She spoke with the familiarity of long acquaintance and intimacy, and evidently under the impression of not being understood by the stranger.

"No," answered Chievosa, in the language in which she had addressed him, "I cannot resume it. Were I, indeed, allowed to sing to Margaret, and to Margaret alone, lay would follow lay as by inspiration, until you bade me cease; but to amuse this unknown—and, I must say, most unprepossessing stranger—is it fair to exact this?"

"Why not," replied Margaret. "Is he not our guest? and he is anything but unprepossessing. I think him quite the contrary; but I suppose you envy him."

"Which of his advantages, pray?" said Chievosa, disdainfully; "that of being blind to beauty and deaf to wit—or that of possessing a mind too dull to appreciate the purity of the pearl or the sweetness of the flower? That only seems to me worthy of notice in him as being most strange."

"Then it is you that are wilfully blind," exclaimed Margaret. "One may be possessed of sense and manner both, without speaking poetry as you Spaniards are but too apt to do. Indeed, Lopez, at all times such flowers of speech are more becoming to song than friendly converse. But I will not ask again."

And turning away, she was passing before Arkel with a light step, when Paul, who had been exchanging a few words with Kay, took her by the hand, and whispered something in her ear. An exclamation—which her uncle repressed by a severe look—had almost escaped her. Arkel was puzzled to think whether what he had said referred to himself or not, but had, at that time, no means of ascertaining.

"Will you not visit the *Tapezereypandt*, the Exchange, or some of our fine churches?" said Cornelius. "Antwerp is a city well worthy of notice and admiration."

Arkel pleaded the shortness of his stay as an excuse for not investigating better the deservedly far-famed city, but said it was certainly his intention to do so on his next visit, when, probably, he would have more leisure. Then, taking leave of the family, more especially of Margaret, with more courtesy of manner than he had yet shown, he and Kay departed.

A short time after they were gone, Margaret retired to her own room. She cast herself into a large arm-chair placed opposite to a small mirror which reflected her fair young face, but its expression of deep abstraction showed how little she was conscious of the object on which her gaze was fixed. Her thoughts involuntarily reverted to the young stranger. She was astonished to find how much he interested her. She was in the habit of seeing many coming and going to and from her father's hospitable roof, but hitherto they merely engaged her attention by their display of national peculiarities or their accounts of distant wonders, but left no more trace in her remembrance than do passing shadows on the surface of limpid water; and she wondered at herself for allowing, in the

present instance, her thoughts to dwell upon one of whom she had seen so little.

Never had any of her father's guests bestowed on her less notice. His person could not for an instant bear comparison with that of Chievosa, neither did his words nor his voice sound so soft; yet there was a charm about him to whose influence she had hitherto been a stranger, a superiority which she did not the less feel that she could not define it. His bearing was so manly and assured! His was the form she could imagine clad in brilliant armour, tilting in the lists, or, no less gaily attired, in a hunting-suit, riding forth under the green boughs of the forest with hound and horn, followed by a numerous train, attending, perhaps, a lady with a hawk upon her wrist. This last image cost the fanciful dreamer a deep sigh. "Such a one," thought she, "I may never be. And yet I am very rich; who can tell?"

Mistress van Meeren, yielding to a childish confidence in omens and presages, had fondly believed that her daughter was destined to great things, and had early taught her the desire of rising above the condition to which she was born, one which, she represented, was far beneath her deserts. Thus had Margaret early learnt to cherish two of the greatest enemies to repose that the female bosom can foster—ambition and romance. Happy was it for her that her uncle Paul was ever near, to warn and to enlighten, or that which, thus checked in time, was a mere shade that tinctured, might have become the pervading and baneful colour of her mind. Recollecting his precepts in time, she courageously dismissed the day-dream which, had she not exerted some power over herself, her imagination would have spun out into a thousand different shapes, whilst hours made unto themselves wings, and glided by unperceived.

It had not escaped her acuteness that there was some sort of mystery attached to the young stranger. From Chievosa's hints that he had met him before, it would have appeared natural to hope that from him she could easily obtain such information as would gratify her curiosity; but experience had taught her that Lopez was not likely to say anything but what might precisely suit his own purposes. Although a long residence in Flanders had, to a certain degree, modified the stiffness and haughty reserve natural to his nation, still he was far from having adopted, altogether, the frank loquacity peculiar to the Flemings.

The reluctance which she felt about questioning Chievosa upon the subject of her musing gave it a new turn, and she began to consider her own situation and the real state of her feelings towards that person. Indeed, they had not as yet taken any decided turn. Although nothing could exceed the homage which Margaret constantly received from him, it partook more of that of a Pagan worshipper at the shrine of his favourite idol than of the frank homeliness of true affection. It bore the stamp of insincerity in its very extravagance; and inexperienced as was Margaret, all this varnish of devotedness failed to bring to her mind a satisfactory conviction of having inspired a real attachment, the surest road to the female heart, although to succeed in completely convincing a sensible girl in such matters is a more difficult task than vulgar-minded men are inclined to believe.

Be that as it may, in spite of Chievosa's flowery professions, Margaret was much disposed to doubt the honesty, not only of his love, but even of

his character. Perhaps her doubts had not, altogether, originated with herself. Her uncle had taken especial pains to instil early into her mind as much of his prejudices against Spaniards in general, and Chievosa in particular, as lay in his power. The feeling of hatred so young and so kind a heart could not harbour, but Paul had succeeded in planting there distrust,—a feeling the most inimical of all others to love. Yet there were many things which told in Chievosa's favour. He enjoyed, in a high degree, the good opinion of both her parents. He might, moreover, prove an anchor of safety, if the storm that was gathering around them were eventually to threaten her own family.

Besides these graver considerations, her personal advantages, the mystery and romance in which his private history was enveloped, were not without some charm to a youthful and lively imagination. So deep was she plunged in this labyrinth of thought, that she did not, at first, hear a low knock at the door of the apartment. It was repeated; she started from her reverie, flew to the door, and her uncle Paul stood before her; but his features bore an expression which sent all her blood from her cheeks to her heart.

"What can have happened, my dear uncle?" said Margaret, in a tremulous voice, a foreboding of evil having seized upon her. "Pray do not attempt to deny it: I see by your countenance that something has happened."

"No, Margaret," said her uncle, endeavouring, but in vain, to repress an agitation of manner very unusual with him; "nothing has yet happened, but something that will assuredly give you pain, will take place within a few hours. Margaret, we are going to part."

"You are, then, going to England?" exclaimed Margaret.

"No,—not to England; but I am going to leave, *for ever*, the roof under which I was born,—the home which beheld the joys of my boyhood, and the hopes, the sorrows, and struggles of after-years. This is, indeed, the severest pang that I have experienced since that awful hour of my existence which blighted its better portion. In like manner will the decline of my life be embittered by this last and most painful trial."

"But why leave us, dearest uncle," said Margaret, "since it causes you pain? How could you ever think of leaving us?" And the tears started to the eyes of the affectionate girl.

"Because, Margaret, I have at last awaked from a long dream. I have not that weight in my family which I had a right to expect. My advice is disregarded,—my personal sacrifices are overlooked, and considérations of personal comfort and interest are preferred to the peace of mind of one who, having lost his all, has now nought on which to rest his affections. However, all this is over now; nor will I suffer it, henceforth, to unman me thus."

Paul could not conceal, as he spoke, a weakness much at variance with his usual composure, which brought tears, if not to his eyes, at least to his voice. There was an audible sensation of suffocation at his throat; but he conquered it, and proceeded.

"Sob not so, Margaret; I cannot endure the sight of your grief; my heart may be strong against all but *that*. Be comforted, my dear child; I part not in anger, but in sorrow. If I, henceforth, remain a stranger to everything that passes here—if I meet, without a smile or a greeting, those whom I am bound to love, it will be solely out of motives of prudence, not from any bitterness of feeling towards any one, and least of all towards you, my poor child, who have never offended me."

"But, dearest uncle," said Margaret, endeavouring to restrain the violence of her emotion, which almost impeded her speech, "why should prudence require you to avoid those who have a right to seek and cherish you?"

"As to that right, Margaret," said Paul, with a bitter smile, "it is one which your father and mother are very willing to relinquish. They have acceded, not only without remonstrance, but joyfully, to the proposal of a final separation which they think will free them from the many and great dangers to which the harbouring of a heretic exposes them. I forgive the egotism that actuates them; it is one of the most natural, if not of the most honourable, feelings inherent to poor humanity. But what I cannot forgive, is the wilful blindness with which they rush upon misfortunes which they could so easily avoid. England affords them at once security to life and property, liberty of action and opinion, and a home for you, until such a time as the unhappy differences of this poor distracted country be settled, and a happier day have dawned upon it, when they might return in peace."

"My father wishes, I know, to take no decided measures; to show himself in all things conformable to government, yet to betray no friends; to avoid all share, whatever, in what is going forward, and gradually to withdraw from affairs and from the circle of unnecessary, perhaps dangerous intimacies. In short, he hopes to find safety in obscurity, and would hurry on nothing, but abide his time."

"And time will hurry him on, and hurl him to destruction with its iron hand! I foresee it all: you and your wealth will be flung at the head of that vile Spaniard."

"Nay, uncle, you wrong my father there. He will never see his child wedded to any one but a Fleming. He merely considers Chievosa as a protector in the hour of need."

"Thrice blinded, unhappy brother!" exclaimed Paul, with the energy of anger. "Does he not see that his want of decision will cause his ruin? Chievosa will soon perceive, if he has not already read, your father's designs; and believe me, Margaret, he will well know how to bring on that hour of need, when he alone can save. But, my dearest child, suffer not your reason to be led astray. Trust not this Spaniard. I know nothing against him; and yet I have secret misgivings amounting to certainty. Were he a fair, honest trader, without ambition or foolish pretence, I might esteem him more. But remember, my dear girl, that mystery more generally conceals evil beneath its veil than good, be its folds never so gracefully adjusted."

"But, uncle," said Margaret, "whom shall I now have to advise, to warn, and to protect me against this union which, perhaps, after all, may soon be urged upon me? Oh! leave me not when most I need you."

"Alas! Margaret, I repeat it, for your own sake it must be so. I am going to face endless dangers; but as my cause is just, so do I embrace it with a clear conscience, and a full determination to abide by it, happen what may. It must, however, be our especial care to make our rupture as public as possible, that my deeds may never, in any manner, be connected with this family. We shall carefully give out that this quarrel has been caused by a difference of religious opinions, which, until now, your father had not discovered: all this has, already, been agreed upon between us. To-night, when all are plunged in sleep, we shall

separate our worldly treasures. To-morrow I remove, openly, hence. After a whole life spent in peace, harmony, and the sweet interchange of family affections, thus do brothers part! Cruel, cruel Philip! Thou hast much to answer for!"

"Are we never to reunite?—never to meet again?" said Margaret, seizing her uncle's hand; "say, dear uncle, must I thus, without any fault of mine, lose my earliest, my best friend? Can you thus abandon your Margaret, the child of your adoption?"

"No," said Paul, much moved, "no; I will still watch over you from afar; unseen I will still protect you; though unheard, still endeavour to guide you. And if my worst fears should be realised, in me you will ever find a father, and your mother a friend."

"But shall I never see you more?" persisted Margaret, with a look of such pleading affection, that even Paul's stern resolution faded before it.

"Openly we may not—we cannot, my dear child. But, perhaps, we may be able to devise some secret means by which to correspond. But, hark! Margaret—the evening bells are striking. It is the appointed signal—I am expected elsewhere. Farewell, my child; I would take leave of you undisturbed and alone, for to you I feel not ashamed to confess my regrets, my weakness. May Heaven guard you, my poor, beloved Margaret; and may my boding heart deceive me, for it feels as if woe, and woe alone, were to be the lot of all."

He hastily embraced his niece, and left the apartment.

GODIVA.

A Coventre Mysterie.

BY J. E. CARPENTER.

(AFTER TENNYSON—A LONG WAY!)

I waited one day for the train, at the wicket
Of that iron-gate by the Policeman guarded,
Through which you may pass, if you've got a day-ticket
("Sans" which, of the privilege, you are debarred it),
And there—having nothing else better to do,
Though the Coventry spires, all three were in view,
I shaped the old Legend of that ancient City—
In the manner of Tennyson—into a ditty.

THERE lived, in the year of our Lord—but no matter,
'Tis so long ago that the date is forgotten;
And perhaps, after all, this account may read patter
Divested of all that is musty and rotten;
A Baron—a regular bluff, feudal Baron,
An old English gentleman, finer than Farren;
A much finer Baron, too, than they who 'arter,
The Chartists of those days, made John sign the Charter;
In fact, such a one as we never now hit on,
Except in the works of Sir E. Bulwer Lytton:
Leofric the Bold, Earl of Mercia, his name,
Who, when William "the conquering hero" here came,
Because he would not pay the Monarch his rent,
Was the first man from court e'er to Coventry sent.

Now, the Earl had a wife—clever, youthful, and fair,
With a bright pair of eyes, and a good head of hair;
At least, if the likeness they put in the print
Of the famous procession, may give us a hint,
She was handsome enough—if a man so may speak,
For Venus herself—in the *poses plastiques;*
And so fond was she of the people about her,
That, as history goes, they could not do without her;
Such a planning, determined, good, artful contriver,
Was ne'er seen before as the Ladye Godiva.
But hard was the heart of Leofric the Bold,
The people he *rated;* in fact, *they were toll'd,*
With all the *sang-froid* that the Whigs of our day
Make the unwilling people the Income Tax pay,
That he must have the tin, and could not do without it,
And advised them to make no more bother about it.

So the people of Coventry, deeming that no man
Would turn a deaf ear to the voice of a woman,
Petitioned the Countess to speak to the churl,
And get the blind side of the toll-taking Earl.
But Leofric, as deaf as, in fable, the adder,
Said, "finances were bad, and he'd not have them badder.
In vain urged the lady the stout Earl in vain,
He put off the question again and again;
But she stuck to her text, and to him, so completely,
That he thought of a plan that would trick her as neatly,
By vowing toll-free if the town must be made, he
Would have her ride through it, as should ride, no lady.
Now I need not describe—and 'tis not my intention,
The little arrangements she made, here to mention,
Because, if the short-sighted Coventry people
Would *not* see the lady, from house, wall, or steeple,—
There was nothing in what she did that day improper,
For, if none were about, where was he who could stop her?
Perchance in *her hurry* her husband to hustle,
That history's wrong, and she *rode in a bustle.*
However, she *did* ride—that cannot be doubted,
And the man who'd deny it deserves to be scouted;
Besides, there was one—but he paid for his peeping—
Who witnessed the fact,
But was caught in the act
Of peeping and prying,
When he should have been lying
Like the rest of the citizens, snoring and sleeping:
A tailor, good lack!—but the history's plain—
What he did see he never could look at again,
For a reason—the same that would hurt yours or my sight—
He was so much surprised that he quite lost his eye-sight!
So the old Earl relented,
Consented—repented;
And henceforth that famous equestrian rider
His Countess, had nothing she asked for denied her;
And the citizens still
Keep their cash in the till,
For these were the words the Earl put in his will:—
"I, Luriche, for the love of thee,
Doe make Coventre tol-free."
And this is the whole of the singular his-torie
Of that piece of tom-foolerie, and Coventre mysterie.

VALDARNO; OR, THE ORDEAL OF ART-WORSHIP.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter VIII.

The morning appointed for my sister's marriage was come, and she was wedded to the Count Orazio Pallavicini, for so it was to be. At the completion of the ceremony, they were met at the church-doors by a stately procession on horseback, destined to escort them to the palace, and thence, after breakfast, to San Miniato Gate, on their way to Aula Castle. The pages, in rich costume, rode two and two in front, succeeded by grooms, attired in white and purple liveries. They were all mounted on the most beautiful coursers, caparisoned with white and purple cloth, and decked out extravagantly with embossed silver. These, at a foot-pace, tramped proudly on, the noble animals now curvetting in obedience to their rider, now tossing their fine heads in self-commendation, or snorting with startling energy; while the rider himself, not insensible to his personal merits, sat erect in his seat, or in a lounging attitude, according to his humour, or the attention bestowed on him by the crowd. Next followed a band of musicians, the clangor of whose trumpets was incessant; and after them, at some distance, the friends of either house, making altogether a long and, indeed, a splendid cavalcade. The latter party were variously adorned, but chiefly in fine satin surtouts, of the most brilliant colour, with slashed sleeves; hose of golden cloth, finished with trimmings of silver tissue, and hats of scarlet silk, in which was inserted a white plume, giving a gay and noble air to the wearer. Then came, smiling and gay, the bridal equipage, with its pale faces and agitated looks; by the side of it, other grooms, in blue satin doublets, slashed, and sleeves of white, hose to correspond, and plain red bonnets. Behind the bride and bridegroom drove the Lady Trivulzio and myself. The procession was lengthened by other domestics, tenants, and tradesfolk, then gradually lost in the mob. Such was the order in which we proceeded from the Church of Santo Spirito to the Aula Palace, and thence, after the lapse of two hours spent in feasting and merriment, to the city gate, within which there was a general halt, while the count and his lovely bride, attended by two grooms on horseback, went rapidly on.

Intermixed with these formal proceedings there was much to amuse. One buffoon, in particular, I noticed, who kept the spectators in a roar. At one moment he was bowing to some fair maid in the street, with all the airs and graces of the court; at another, kissing his hand heartily to a damsel at the window above him, who waved a flag over the bridal carriage. He would then seize the arm of a crone, and place it within his own, with proposals of marriage and solemn grimaces, which, met by active resistance on her side, not unaccompanied by blushes and uncouth laughter, gave abundant delight to the spectators, in the midst of which the antique dame merrily bustled off, to the mock regret of the gallant.

Two men stood outside the gate, in charge of horses. Against the girth of one leaned Piombino, pensively. Mezzofonte held the other two by their bridle. I leapt on my saddle, and was imitated in silence by my companion and my attendant. We proceeded slowly through the out-

skirt, and struck into the country by a cross-road. In due time we reached the spot where the deed was done. There we mournfully paused. Now in the neighbourhood of the low hills across the desert, we halted again, and this time dismounting, gave our horses in charge to Mezzofonte, who found shelter from observation there while Piombino and I went on. We scrambled for a long time from rock to rock, exchanging not a word, the one guiding the other, our spirits oozing from us through fatigue and pain as the sharp stones cut us, but ever replenished from within by the growth of vengeance. Our cause was righteous. The innocent and weak had been struck down by the mighty; it was ours to trace the drippings of the murderer's weapon to the infernal den! And it should be done, and the assassin be dragged into the light! His horrid secret should be wrenched from his breast! Though his present lot were bliss—though in his triumph he might have taken to his foul embrace the fairest of women, and, holding fast his prize, have resolved to defy the justice of the world—there was one who would track his steps to the remotest lands, who would hold up the tragic mask before his eyes at every encounter. Henceforth should he be hunted to the death—justice a terror to him all round, and conscience the whisperer of retribution within him.

"Are you sure of your way?" I said.

"Perfectly," replied Piombino.

"You are armed?"

"I am."

"Is the cavern now far off?"

"There it is!" said Piombino, in a significant whisper, stopping suddenly, and pointing.

We had reached the base of a rocky eminence, whose proportions awakened ideas of things the most unsightly, and such as are not often startled from the sleep which petrifies the firstlings of creation. The way was across a flood, by the discord of whose waters the air around was unsilenced. The fabled monsters of old, or more dire deformities of fresh-sprung soul, might there have found birth, as in a congenial region, for every rock appeared shattered by strong and unskilled intelligences, unearthly masons, who themselves might have been reared and apprenticed in the abortive womb of hell. Fragments, whose harsh surfaces betrayed their remote correspondence with nature, paved the ground, and maddened the stream, which, as an instinct-impelled messenger on its allotted way, crept by apace like a land-serpent swift of fin, its coils glistening afar, its neck on the crags; and these it no sooner touched than, as if decapitated, its carcase fell over in foam. There cavern lay within cavern, and I entered, as if about to trace within the centre of the earth the architectural labours of Gothic time. There was the deep arched roof, the unshapely column, and its chaotic decorations. At the aperture of a second gallery stood a figure bearing a torch, whose light illumined new archways which dwindled into obscurity as the flame shed around it a red, infernal glare. In the person of the torchbearer I at once recognised Thanatos, but he soon disappeared among the shades. Now, prompted by fierce curiosity, I pursued the straggling rays which accompanied his track, and watched him through passages which seemed to increase in grandeur as we advanced. At times he raised his flaring wand, and turned to gaze back through the darkness—my steps, which gained on him, perhaps audible at

times, and not synchronising with his, nor remote enough to be their echo. Never had I dreamed of beholding a haunt like this unearthly sanctuary; and I gloried in the chance which had drawn me thither. Unseen I saw the wonders of the place, and shuddered for a moment as one about to be immured in the monastic gloom of another world, whose cloisters are paced in imperfect penitence, and in the aisles of whose deserted cathedrals souls wander without prayer.

Thanatos paused to lean down and examine the ground with his torch; the flame fell for an instant upon his countenance, when he with the light vanished. As he stooped, I saw the guilty purpose on his illuminated face, but much inquietude besides; the undisguised emotion of a scheming heart, and the look of the peaceless. Somewhat touched with commiseration at a sight so human and forlorn, I yet quickened my steps; and I reached the spot at which he had descended just as the door closed upon his head. A partition between the confines of two worlds, whose characters, however, approximated closely at either boundary, seemed to part us. Ere long I heard his voice with prolonged echoes bellow under my feet, and the noise, like underground thunder, made me sensible of sympathy here with the doings of the bad below; of a feeling which, like the fog of evening, tends downwards, grovelling for mere excitement's sake towards the springs of unholiness, and habitations of the unloved of heaven. His voice, so bland in my presence, was now the halloo of the bandit, and found a response in the distant and hollow deep. With my ear resting on the door, I remained a long time at the place. After a lapse, two voices were audible, and reached my ear like whisperings through a tube. Soon they were louder, and began to ascend, accompanied by the scraping of feet and creaking of a ladder. I arose, and feeling about for Piombino, who shook violently, retired with him to the wall, and drew him with me into an ample fissure in the rock, not unobserved by me when the light was present. The trap-door opened sooner than I had expected, and seemed to rest on a dense vapour of light, when two figures issued with alacrity, each holding a torch. I saw both as they passed—knew both—and, for the first time, learned to whom I had been indebted for the services of Thanatos, and with whom he was in secret alliance.

Before the two robbers were out of sight, I dismissed Piombino with an injunction to return to Mezzofonte, and with him and the horses to await my return at the road-side inn. Thus far, then, success had attended on our hazardous expedition. Alone, and heedless, I was led to seize the ring, and raise the door. Below me was a cavern in which a torch burned, but all was still in its atmosphere of crime. The ladder was at my foot, and I was led to step on it. Its contact as it vibrated under my weight charmed me on irresistibly; to retire was impossible, and I gave way to the unbounded temptation. As I descended I tried to count the steps, but the giddy journey bewildered me: seized with a sort of fierce delight, I had difficulty in concentrating my faculties sufficiently for self-preservation. I grasped the perilous steps; my hair bristled; I was almost impelled to give utterance to a yell, that my soul might flood with its sympathies an unseen world. My descent completed, I stood and looked around. The cave was circular, covered with a Persian carpet, and bestrewn with the implements of the felon's art. Pikes, fire-arms, swords, and stilettos formed a not inelegant group. Some of them were stained with blood which had gushed from human breasts to become rust,

the sole memento of a hapless doom; while the victim cast upon the bony relics of brute mortality in an adjoining cavern, whose races had perished in peace, was left among them to moulder in unchristian burial. Powder barrels served as seats, and were covered over with the skins of goats. Flasks of wine formed a merry group, and reflected a purple beam on similar vessels brimming with oil of the olive. Corn was seen also, and on its heap were piled clusters of grapes, together with figs and other fruits. Besides, there were numerous dresses, caskets, and other articles of refinement strewn carelessly across open trunks, or littered over the carpet; whereupon I judged that the robbers held their goods in common.

This chamber, dreary, yet inviting, had open communication with others, all more or less in use, if the presence of implements were to be the test. I seized the torch, and entered the first den; the remote end of it had rarely been explored but by wild beasts, which in former times had probably known every entrance to this scene of horrors. There lay the bones of reptiles, whose race, from the starting point to the furthermost goal, was extinct; these were mingled with the elephantine tusk, the antlers of the once swift stag, the ribs and bony columns of the bear; and, cradled within all, was observable the deeply-socketed emblem of mankind. The skeleton of the almost traditionary lizard, which, without quitting the water's bank, is said to have snapped with its mighty jaws the higher branches of the palm and tops of the arborescent fern, had there been deposited by rivers now dispersed, and with no longer a bed to flow over. These creatures had been destroyed for ages; life had changed its forms; the instincts had been replaced by virtues, and succeeded by humanity itself; and this, through endless vicissitudes, had triumphed over every adversity, and risen to that Christian elevation which brings the soul into conjunction with the Creator. But these graves, though buried in long silence, had at last been only disturbed by the robber's mirth and malediction. Evil had there taken refuge from the pursuit of good; the crucifix had not been planted within that rock; the voice of praise had not reached the Creator from those caverns of death and desolation: but the reiterated curse of man had swept the roof and walls, and had at last paused unharshly on the ear of the Arch-destroyer.

Still aided by my torch I went on through this vast cemetery, which thus recorded, in tokens not hard to decipher, the self-burial of the lords who ruled an elder creation. After wandering for some time, I espied a gleam of day. The sight was agreeable, and I hastened forward to explore its source. It came from a mouth of these caverns at the opposite side of the mountain, whose interior I thus had traversed.

From this aperture I looked with rapture upon another flood, which splashed the ledge at which I stood, and the noise of whose rushing sinews refreshed my gloomy thoughts, and invited me again into scenes of day. I escaped with much difficulty from the gorge to the hill-side at the left, whence I gazed on a mountain at the opposite side, clothed scantily with native pine. The distant view was wild; and a deep, uncultivated valley lay beneath it, devoted by nature to the conveyance of many waters from the wilderness to fields and vineyards afar. How little do we see of our native land, when we visit not its lonely seats!

I resolved, after brief consideration, to re-enter the robbers' home,

and endeavour to clear up, by some device or other, the mystery of Moro's fate. Ere I had time to turn round, however, my attention was arrested. On the distant side of the valley I saw a gallant troop of horsemen winding its way down the mountain towards the turbid river at its base. One of the party plunged into the water, and was soon, with his horse, afloat on its rapid stream. The others followed; and I saw nearly a dozen horsemen crossing, and at the same time descending with the flood. It now appeared, that they had chosen a point at which to embark their fates on the water somewhat lower down than they designed to land; for, on gaining the shore, they plunged into the tributary river close at hand, which fell from their own caverns, galloped upwards through its foam, dashing spray and rocks behind them, as, like sea-centaurs, they mounted through the hissing cataract.

Chapter IX.

Before I could retrace my steps to the gorge, the cavalcade had vanished, and the torrent once more roared undisturbed. My torch had not expired; it would light me again through the catacombs. I re-entered their labyrinth, and regained the circular hall. On my way thither my attention was arrested by the neighing of a horse, and by voices from within unseen recesses; but I saw nothing, and hastened on.

My foot now instinctively touched the ladder, not with a view to ascend, my determination being to subject myself to doubtful hospitality —perhaps to the risk of death—rather than not accomplish my object. But, as if to fix my fate at a moment when I might have wavered, a hoarse voice exploded above my head, and was answered by another from the recesses where the horses had been stabled. It was a signal indicative of fresh arrivals at the upper entrance, and the response was to the effect that all was right. In an instant I was startled by a heavy body dropping at my feet; it was a fine kid. The creature breathed but once after reaching the ground of the abyss into which it was flung. During its expiring gasp a host of fowl came fluttering from above, and dropped from fright and exhaustion. I now looked up again towards the summit of the ladder, around which, and against the upper walls, I saw several pheasants, while human figures descended the steps. I paced the floor, and was shortly accosted by men in the dress of peasantry. I returned the salute with civil indifference, and pursued my walk to and fro.

"Where is the captain?" I inquired.

The party turned to me with some surprise, and asked who had brought me there, if not the captain himself. An expressive whistle brought others of the band to share in the counsels of those present, and I was shortly surrounded.

The second detachment belonged to the troop, and showed much surprise at the presence of a stranger.

"Who left you here?" asked one after another.

"Do not trouble yourself concerning me or my affairs. All I require is to shake hands with your captain," replied I, with cold politeness.

Shortly a whisper ran from man to man, and a respectful demeanour towards me became observable in all. At length one of the company approached me with a profound obeisance, and said,

"If I mistake not, it is our happiness to owe the honour of this visit to the great Prince of Valanidi, the friend and lasting ally of our brave captain Scoronconcolo—no doubt introduced by the chief himself, whose return we expect, or by his permission."

To this address I returned a smile, but still paced the chamber with reserve. The speaker, as if his respect for me was heightened at my coolness, flung a tiger's-skin over an empty barrel, and offered me the seat thus prepared.

I was not slow to recognise the faces whose first introduction to me had been at the Villa Brancaleone. Observing my disinclination to converse, some began to talk of the day's sport, and to boast of its success, while those not engaged in it only carelessly eyed the game. A good hour passed slowly away before the captain made his entry. He came by the labyrinths through which I had last penetrated the cave. When he saw me, his astonishment was certainly great, but he welcomed me, and addressed me by name. An uneasy expression lingered in his eye for a time. He soon controlled it, however, and, in the presence of his company, saluted me as his noble guest. His reflections, no doubt, as well as mine, were about Thanatos, whom I had seen with him above; but, unconscious of my discovery, he soon made himself easy. I thus took his thoughts in at my eye, without letting out my own reflections.

"We must have a feast to-day, in the name of our guest," said Scoronconcolo. "Let the banquet be at once prepared."

In an instant the floor was cleared. One dragged away the kid; another drove the fowls before him; a third levelled his gun at the pheasants as they roosted above. A fire had begun to blaze in the next recesses, log after log was added, and the burning pile communicated a lurid glare to the scene. I now felt safe for the present, but from the first had scarcely entertained an idea of danger. Convinced that Scoronconcolo must question me about my introduction into his retreat, I did not prepare a reply. Such, to one fertile in resources like myself, was ever ready. In the society of these men I knew no fear. To gratify my curiosity concerning their habits and way of thinking was an excitement; and a remote sympathy with their manner of life made me feel at home in their presence. But I had little leisure to think of myself. The fierce blaze, the flaying and roasting of the kid, the plucking of game and poultry, all within my view—lastly, the elaborate toilet of the robbers, converting them, one after the other, from butcher, cook, and peasant, into seeming princes, the whole attended with much grimace and strutting, as if unconscious of being watched—diverted, nay, charmed me.

In due time the feast was set out on a floor spread over with finest damask, and covered with a profusion of glass, porcelain, gold, and silver. Tuscan lamps lighted up the repast, and torches glared at a distance. The viands were smoking hot, the wine was as bright as the eyes of the party, and the goblets deep as the heart of the quaffing robber. Scoronconcolo presented his band to me in ceremonious form, announcing each by a name of the twelve disciples; but there were only eleven, and the name of Judas was unheard. A little startled at the sacrilege, my thoughts cautiously passed to Thanatos as the missing one and the traitor, while towards Scoronconcolo I assumed an air of apparent satisfaction. It was not unusual, I learned, for bands to unite in the same number as that of the Saviour and Twelve.

The robbers, like the chief himself, were arrayed in Asiatic costume. Like Arabs, we seated ourselves on the ground. After my ride and long wanderings among rocks and mountains, I was not ravenous merely, but insatiate, for I had refused to break the fast at the marriage feast. I tore the delicious flesh from the kid's ribs, and helped heartily to despatch the game. We poured the Lagrime, the Chianti, the Monte-Pulciano in streams which sparkled as they fell, and foamed lightly, and pledged each other's health with touching glasses. I sat at the right hand of Scoronconcolo; on his left was one whose breast was covered with decorations, and I saw that many wore orders.

"Some of our companions," I remarked to the chieftain, with an air of pleasantry, "appear to have been favourites at court in their day. What orders are these? I ask for information, being myself no courtier."

"The most common amongst us," said Scoronconcolo, "is the order of Santo Spirito, which you must allow is appropriate to our calling."

We exchanged smiles.

"I am more in earnest than you may suppose in that remark," pursued he, with some emphasis; "merit, even under ground, finds its level in the long run. His Holiness, the chief agent of Heaven, is said to be infallible; and I admit he is so, indirectly, in many of his acts. Let me explain. Himself a bad example to man in every way (but I need not enumerate to you a great man's ordinary crimes), he wears the lovely robe of the righteous, and the result is marvellous! He appoints men like himself to the highest offices of state, makes them cardinal-princes and prince-bishops: these, clothed in a robe of the same cut, in a moment become pastors. Now behold how this robe of righteousness itself, and not the man whose skin it covers, conduces to the needful miracle of justice. Some monsignor, let us suppose, sets out on a mission from the Holy City; he travels unknown (to his Maker as well as to the world), and is delivered by the chances of fortune into our hands—the unclean hands of Scoronconcolo and his compeers! We know his face again; it is he whom we have heard in the churches, saying, 'Wickedness never prospers, and pride shall have a fall!' Well, he passes us on the highway, but he does not remember the scattered of his flock—the lost sheep of his burnt-up pastures. Still we salute him, and he takes it not amiss; but there he would that it should end, for we bleat not, but point to our mountains and ask him in. And now he feels as he never before felt: it is not hell that he contemplates, for his active faith recoils from that result, and faces death itself. He has no colour, his eye lacks courage, yet he smiles. At this stage his soul undergoes a change, and feels almost as if driven by the invisible soul-hunter into a blind alley. He then rallies his thoughts; under the same pale smile he grows conscious that if he could but escape he should be great again, greater than ever, perhaps for the first time thankful. But he who feels the iron grasp of power upon his arm cannot for long enjoy a dream of safety; he rather feels with his foe that the chances of escape are few! Has he a reverie of heaven do you suppose when his knife is at the throat of a fatted sheep, or his hands are raised to bless the flock from which he picked it? Yet bethinking himself, and failing in other expedients, such is the force of habit, he offers us his blessing! He says we would not injure him—a holy man: he knows we would do so gladly, nay, with jocularity, as boys would turn a toad over. A holy man!—his robe, certainly, stands little chance of being rent in the fray, whatever his

skin may suffer; he leaves that righteous garb at home,—it would have betrayed him by its loose and graceless folds. Poor devil! he is not worse than the rest of us. Then why do I go on railing at him thus? Because he has not yet offered us his money. His diplomatic instinct suggests that he may yet find rescue, gold and all! But his hope is as unpractised as his faith. He begins, however, by the promise of a heavy ransom; the promise only, for he denies that he has treasure, and he would gladly fulfil it by loading us with chains! And now, at a given signal, to recal him to his unsophisticated senses, to teach him that he is not negotiating with kings or ministers, a blow is struck; and behold a total revolution! He who denied his treasure, as Peter once did his Master, feels suddenly as if he had heard the cock crow—as if the real devil had got on the dung-hill to brag! He does not wait for the triple warning, repents himself at once, and weeps gold and jewels! Thus are we made to do the work of justice, though not as accredited agents; and thus through the holy Pope descend to us these outward tokens of grace which we wear near our hearts."

"Such, then, is the history of the order of Santo Spirito which many of you wear?" said I.

"It is," replied Scoronconcolo.

"You have found it, among other riches, in the jewel-box of some prelate?"

"Yes."

"But whence so many?"

"We carry on a large trade in the way of prelates."

"A trade in prelates?"

"Yes, a transport trade."

"Explain."

"We take contracts for the removal of ecclesiastical dignitaries from their sees. For example: a young aspirant to mitral honours has the reversion of a bishopric promised him; and what he earnestly desires is that the incumbent may die a natural death, than which nothing is less likely to come about."

"He must abide his turn with patience."

"His relatives in power think otherwise. Do you suppose that a Salviati would allow a nephew of his to wait? Time is too precious, and a new order of things may accrue."

"You, then, are employed to do the foul play. Is death the penalty of blocking up another's path?"

"No other means has been found out of gaining the end desired."

"Then you do not object to exercise your weapons for hire?"

"We do not seek the work, but are obliged to undertake it at the instance of great people, or we should be hunted down: not permitted to enjoy our ordinary trade in peace. We prefer the highway, and never take life unless we are threatened."

I had heard enough of this, and had learned—what I suspected—that they did their work for hire—a source of reflection for my leisure. To turn the subject into a fresh direction, I then remarked,

"You confer the orders thus gotten on the most enterprising of your body?"

"The bravest stand first on the list for distinction, and next to them the most subtle. Such honours revive a pleasant recollection of past dangers, especially on an occasion like this."

As he spoke, he filled his glass and drank, while he conferred looks of

approval on all, and delight at his grateful allusion to former services was depicted variously on each face. In the midst of exhilaration there was an expression of dreadful earnestness in these men's aspect—a reality of crime which could wear no mask, a foul alliance between habit and nature. Their laugh even was not innocent, nor was it joyous, but rang like a cracked bell. No vestige of their childhood remained in their hearts; no traces of human love. The robe of unrighteousness covered all that was ever good within them. Not that they put it on for an occasion; it was a vestment that they wore always, and never changed, so they did not feel its weight on their souls.

Chapter X.

To the repast succeeded songs, interspersed with deep draughts of wine, and, at intervals, with roars of laughter. Play followed, and its shifting events of loss and gain were announced by rounds of blasphemy, that artillery of the self-exploding soul. One of the party having relieved his purse of its contents, remained in some measure happy, though sad, and, seizing a lute, sang, in plaintive air, the faithlessness of woman. Meanwhile the one who rattled the dice was surrounded by piles of gold, and found no lack of customers willing to acquire riches without toil, or to purchase excitement at the risk of their precarious gains. Others played at mora, and—such is habit—pursued the game with honesty as well as characteristic ardour. And while these pastimes proceeded, some, in truly Asiatic ease, pressed the intoxicating and fragrant weed of the New World into the richly-carved bowl, and, as from a small bright furnace, breathed through amber-mounted tubes a soothing vapour, the curling form of which they watched as it rose, until, mingled with the ideal, it was gone. As the hour grew late, they talked less freely, and then only of their personal courage, and made no reply to each other, except by looks, at these allusions to their own deeds.

During the whole time I continued to converse with the chief on his impulses and creed, and thought him, while he flattered and excused himself, a better hero, as times went, than many who had grasped a kingdom. But he held only a command in the least reputable war of plunder against his kind—one which, equally rapacious with that levied on the subject by the state, had not the credit even of lawful authority to give it support. The love of life is strong. In him I saw that life exposed almost daily in the acquisition of its bread, but with such a boldness as to secure him every luxury of existence. There is no greater man than he who faces death unawed, incited, not by fame, but by confidence in his strength and prowess. But his greatness ends with this world; he dies like the lion, a spectacle to be beheld admiringly. I liked the brigand's courage, for experience had hitherto taught me nothing that resembled it. When opposed to danger myself, my heart would sicken, though my soul was cool and firm, conscious that it carried with it to the conflict those immortal qualities which never fail, the very sight of peril striking at the root of lofty emotions, which wake up as out of deep hybernation, and effectually antagonise fear. Thus lived this chief in caverns, beloved by the daring, a respectable foe to those who as often used him as they offered rewards for his head. This genuine bravo was endowed with such philosophy as best suited his condition, of a kind tending to harmonise, not dispel, the savage romance of his being. He

saw in his dreary haunts a suitable abode for one whose habits were predatory; he contemplated, in the rude country about him, a source of prosperity to happier valleys, as, in his own destructive nature, a safeguard to the liberties of happier men. "For the dagger," said he, playfully, "must sometimes take the soundings of a despot's heart; and when a cowardly people are afraid to embark on the desperate enterprise, how priceless is the assistance lent them by men like us, who have no dread to restrain their hand, and no remorse to haunt their souls. We are paid like the executioner, and, actuated by no revengeful motive, take no thought; our duty is mechanical, and our conscience, therefore, if we have any, secure from harm. The assassination of Giuliano de' Medici was a step not uncalled for, and Galeazzo merited his end. And deem you that the regal instinct will not as often need the same sort of repression hereafter? Be not surprised if one day you hear that Scoronconcolo has stuck a king."

I drank with these outlaws through the night with a view to gain their confidence, and found pleasure in their society. I conversed with all by turns, and from each learned something new of degraded nature. They were not a base-born herd; they grovelled not, except in sin, but were men in whose veins was the blood of the Colonna, the Doria, and other historic names. And with all their deeply-rooted vice they had one nobleness—they were prouder of themselves than of ancestors; possessed of the instinct of all energetic minds in deeming that olden dynasties are surpassed by new. And true was it that all antiquity is for ever extinguished; true as that were the races amid whose awful bones we then revelled. And mightiest is the present: for the new age is the master of the old; it absorbs its elements, walks over its remains. Yes, antiquity, while it continues to possess a place with the thinker which excludes all else, is irrestorably gone; its dial-plate lost, and its spoils like the speechless inmates of sepulchres wherein history sleeps. Be they excavated and exposed to-day, they are not disentombed; the huge stone of the past is not to be thus rolled away. There are they still; nothing here resembles their inimitable charm, whether known in crumbling walls, in the wrecks of sculpture, and the fables of descent; or felt in the chorus, still pouring down upon us from remotest ether like the memory of voices not heard; or seen in the many-columned atmosphere whose aspect, like something heavenly, has yet a barrenness of its own which it gives to deserts, bidding defiance to the restorer's art! Its monument steeped in the piety of the nameless dead, of whose divine service the flight of startled birds augurs no revival! But if the light of heroic times can shine thus through the graves of art, how brilliant must have been their present! Then let us prefer the living to the dead still, and deify each other as the ancients deified themselves.

Among the heaps of gold that the gamesters contended for, I saw a number of antique coins. The heads of the Cæsars changed owners: Augustus was lost and Nero won! I staked the effigy of Cleopatra against them, and with it gained that of kings. What of this old collection I could not win I bought, and my purse was filled with the money of the emperors. In the heat of the game Scoronconcolo, throwing aside his eastern dress, acquainted me that he must absent himself for a time. He commended me to the civil offices of his men, and, intimating that he should return shortly, ascended the steps of the ladder. I deemed the moment felicitous for distributing money among the band in order to

stimulate conversation about myself, while I feigned sleep. Accordingly, what gold remained by me I gave among them, and leaning back in an attitude of repose, simulated heavy slumber. I conjectured, that under the excitement of wine and gold, the discussion would turn on what so much concerned me, the recent outrage against Moro: and no sooner was I heard to breathe deeply than I and my concerns became the topic of discussion. Had I been able to enter into their most secret thoughts it had been impossible for me to have learned more. All, all that had happened became revealed to me through this device. Would that I had not heard a syllable—that my suspicion had remained the mere airy inquisitor which lurks in the shadow of men's deeds. It was not long before symptoms of drowsiness grew manifest in the party, and each was overtaken by sleep on the spot, amidst the scenes of his past revel. My eyes opened upon the group as theirs closed; the lamps still glared around, and for an interval prevented my vision from retiring within by a sort of magical attraction, though my frame was not insensible to the somniferous spell which had seized upon the cavern. Seated on the ground against the wall, my left arm resting on an ottoman, I involuntarily dropped my coins into my lap, and threw my right hand, from which they fell, upon the hilt of my dagger. In this calm posture I felt the approach of sleep, but my eyes remained open, as if to watch the approach of that spirit-calming power. At this juncture, whispers, such as might usher in a dream, were at my ear—the busy, earnest chattering of fancy, emboldened at being the last among the faculties to watch. As its breath ran through the labyrinths of my mind's ear, it shaped itself from æolian into articulate murmurs, and flooded the recollections of the past. The words of Angus respecting the sex of Ippolito were set afloat, not in sounds, but in meaning. I listened, and I attempted in vain to move, riveted by the clasp of sleep, when suddenly the noise, which still continued, made a rush to an arched aperture in the apartment. There a female figure stood, in a white vestment, her face so exactly like Ippolito's that, the idea once entertained, it was as if, vestalised, he had come to greet me with healing smile. Her eyes fell upon me with a power of ravishment experienced only in lightest slumbers, and soothed my senses into the glow of love; and an earnest affection, such as I had not known before, was speedily ripened. I tried to speak, to invite the fair one to my side, but my voice slept; I essayed to upraise my arms, but the will was dissolved. The riveting look, the smile its companion, thrill yet within me as I revert to the vision. It was Virtue, for once seen in her true features, whom to have the privilege of beholding was to love at sight. Now, the tenderness as of a long encouraged passion at once possessed me. She raised her finger and made me a sign to follow. How unhappy was I to be unable! The more I strove to obey the holy call, the more fixed and entranced I remained. My mind whispered its sentiments of mingled bliss and sorrow, but only to itself: a deep flood of tender expression rushed eloquently through me; passion breathed a language of its own, and gave an inspired harmony to words, such as if known to their hearts, never reached the books of the prophets! If the words of my reverie, linked as they were then, could be heard aloud, they would act as a charm upon the most depraved; no ear could resist their magic; they must carry the soul away from its baser occupations into an adoring trance like that which gave them birth, and with which their wondrous meaning ceased.

When she saw that I could not enter on her path, her countenance changed. Her eyes were upraised, her lips parted, not with looks of reproach, but of agony. At first this seemed to manifest bodily pain only, the hair falling back, the distress of the features like that of a woman in labour; an expression of transcendent loveliness, that of suffering magnanimity! This semblance of physical throes soon passed into emotion and became a picture of grief—not that of the eyes only, with their blessed outpourings of relief to the pent-up soul; for all the face wept bitterly. These changes advancing, my pity was excited and as rapidly hurried into sympathy; of all things, associated with the pure and beautiful, most hard to bear. She who was man's saviour before the fall, mourned that the fallen refused to be redeemed by even her divine successor.

The scene had not ended here: as if she now saw all my feebleness, she suddenly tore her bosom open to display the yet deeper purity of her nature. Her breast rose and fell with a true and loving sigh; its beauty laid bare to the inspection of a sinner's eyes! She next turned her face towards the brigands who slumbered around. Their coarse breasts lay negligently bared, and a heart seemed to beat through them, now feebly, as if resting awhile, reprieved in sleep; now with writhings, as if woke up; the venom-bag replenished during rest, and the sting armed anew for the fresh infliction of self-torment.

As my dream grew thus insupportable, it was disturbed by one of the gang whom I saw, with my eyes open, approach and lay his hand on my coins. I did not wake up fully, but the activity of my volition having returned in excess, I withdrew my dagger from its sheath and transfixed the pilferer's hand. His cry aroused me and all in the cavern, and I had the opportunity of witnessing the wondrous play of limb and feature, the cool determination to kill, in those resolute and unflinching men. I held the offender fast, however, and with the hand which was free drew forth a fire-arm, at least resolved not to be the first of the party to die. In this state of defence I set my cool gaze upon the assailants.

Scoronconcolo, unobserved by us in the confusion, was, most fortunately, already upon the ladder, from which he leapt between me and his troops; all fell back in surprise at the suddenness of his return; but they still held their daggers poised, their eyes glaring, and their moustachios quivering upon their lips. The chief struck the foremost of them, then snatched my dagger from the aggressor's hand and presented it to me, while he delivered himself of a lecture to the culprit. I laughed heartily on hearing morality preached by such sanguinary lips, much to the wonderment of the priest-bandit and his congregation. In token of forgiveness, I tendered my hand to all, and begged Scoronconcolo to lead me into the air. We were shortly together under heaven, the sun had risen, the earth exhaled a savoury moisture.

"Farewell, my old ally," I said.

"Before we part," replied Scoronconcolo, "let me hear how you found out my abode in the Volterrana?"

"Not now; it is fit that you return to your mutinous soldiers: soon we shall meet again, when you shall know all."

My manner, as I spoke, was decided. He hesitated for a moment, but said no more, and we parted.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

Chapter V.

THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

Dolefully sounds the All Souls' bell from the tower of the convent church. The bell is one of five, and has obtained the name because it is tolled only for those about to pass away from life. Now it rings the knell of three souls to depart on the morrow. Brightly illumined is the fane, within which no taper hath gleamed since the old worship ceased, showing that preparations are made for the last service. The organ, dumb so long, breathes a low prelude. Sad is it to hear that knell—sad to view those gloriously-dyed panes—and to think why the one rings and the other is lighted up.

Word having gone forth of the midnight mass, all the ejected brethren flock to the abbey. Some have toiled through miry and scarce passable roads. Others have come down from the hills, and forded deep streams at the hazard of life, rather than go round by the far-off bridge, and arrive too late. Others, who conceive themselves in peril from the share they have taken in the late insurrection, quit their secure retreats, and expose themselves to capture. It may be a snare laid for them, but they run the risk. Others, coming from a yet greater distance, beholding the illuminated church from afar, and catching the sound of the bell tolling, at intervals, hurry on, and reach the gate breathless and well-nigh exhausted. But no questions are asked. All who present themselves in ecclesiastical habits are permitted to enter, and take part in the procession forming in the cloister, or proceed at once to the church, if they prefer it.

Dolefully sounds the bell. Barefooted brethren meet together, sorrowfully salute each other, and form in a long line in the great area of the cloisters. At their head are six monks bearing tall lighted candles. After them come the quiristers, and then one carrying the Host, between the incense bearers. Next comes a youth, holding the bell. Next are placed the dignitaries of the church, the prior ranking first, and the others standing two and two, according to their degrees. Near the entrance of the refectory, which occupies the whole south side of the quadrangle, stand a band of halberdiers, whose torches cast a ruddy glare on the opposite tower and buttresses of the convent church, revealing the statues not yet plucked from their niches, the crosses on the pinnacles, and the gilt image of Saint Gregory de Northbury, still holding its place over the porch. Another band are stationed near the mouth of the vaulted passage under the chapter-house and vestry, whose grey,

irregular walls, pierced by numberless richly-ornamented windows, and surmounted by small turrets, form a beautiful boundary on the right; while a third party are planted on the left, in the open space, beneath the dormitory, the torchlight flashing ruddily upon the hoary pillars and groined arches sustaining the vast structure above them.

Dolefully sounds the bell. And the ghostly procession thrice tracks the four ambulatories of the cloisters, solemnly chanting a requiem for the dead.

Dolefully sounds the bell. And at its summons all the old retainers of the abbot press to the gate, and sue for admittance, but in vain. They, therefore, mount the neighbouring hill commanding the abbey, and as the solemn sounds float faintly by, and glimpses are caught of the white-robed brethren gliding along the cloisters, and rendered phantom-like by the torchlight, the beholders half imagine it must be a company of sprites, and that the departed monks have been permitted for an hour to assume their old forms, and revisit their old haunts.

Dolefully sounds the bell. And two biers, covered with palls, are borne slowly towards the church, followed by a tall monk.

The clock was on the stroke of twelve. The procession having drawn up within the court in front of the abbot's lodging, the prisoners were brought forth, and at sight of the abbot the whole of the monks fell on their knees. A touching sight was it to see those reverend men prostrate before their ancient superior,—he condemned to die, and they deprived of their monastic home,—and the officer had not the heart to interfere. Deeply affected, Paslew advanced to the prior, and raising him, affectionately embraced him. After this, he addressed some words of comfort to the others, who arose as he enjoined them, and at a signal from the officer, the procession set out for the church, singing the "*Placebo.*" The abbot and his fellow captives brought up the rear, with a guard on either side of them. All Souls' bell tolled dolefully the while.

Meanwhile, an officer entered the great hall, where the Earl of Derby was feasting with his retainers, and informed him that the hour appointed for the ceremonial was close at hand. The earl arose and went to the church, attended by Braddyll and Assheton. He entered by the western porch, and proceeding to the choir, seated himself in the magnificently-carved stall formerly used by Paslew, and placed where it stood, a hundred years before, by John Eccles, ninth abbot.

Midnight struck. The great door of the church swung open, and the organ pealed forth the "*De profundis.*" The aisles were filled with armed men, but a clear space was left for the procession, which presently entered in the same order as before, and moved slowly along the transept. Those who came first thought it a dream, so strange was it to find themselves once again in the old accustomed church. The good prior melted into tears.

At length, the abbot came. To him the whole scene appeared like a vision. The lights streaming from the altar—the incense loading the air—the deep diapasons rolling overhead—the well-known faces of the brethren—the familiar aspect of the sacred edifice—all these filled him with emotions too painful almost for endurance. It was the last time he should visit this holy place—the last time he should hear those solemn sounds—the last time he should behold those familiar objects—ay, the last! Death could have no pang like this! And with heart well-nigh bursting, and limbs scarcely serving their office, he tottered on.

Another trial awaited him, and one for which he was wholly unprepared. As he drew near the chancel, he looked down an opening on the right, which seemed purposely preserved by the guard. Why were those tapers burning in the side chapel? What was within it? He looked again, and beheld two uncovered biers. On one lay the body of a woman. He started. In the beautiful, but fierce, features of the dead he beheld the witch, Bess Demdike. She was gone to her account before him. The malediction he had pronounced upon her child had killed her.

Appalled, he turned to the other bier, and recognised Cuthbert Ashbead. He shuddered, but comforted himself that he was at least guiltless of his death; though he had a strange feeling that the poor forester had in some way perished for him.

But his attention was diverted towards a tall monk in the Cistertian habit, standing between the bodies, with the cowl drawn over his face. As Paslew gazed at him, the monk slowly raised his hood, and partially disclosed features that smote the abbot as if he had beheld a spectre. Could it be? Could fancy cheat him thus? He looked again. The monk was still standing there, but the cowl had dropped over his face. Striving to shake off the horror that possessed him, the abbot staggered forward, and reaching the presbytery, sank upon his knees.

The ceremonial then commenced. The solemn requiem was sung by the choir; and three yet living heard the hymn for the repose of their souls. Always deeply impressive, the service was unusually so on this sad occasion, and the melodious voices of the singers never sounded so mournfully sweet as then—the demeanour of the prior never seemed so dignified, nor his accents so touching and solemn. The sternest hearts were softened.

But the abbot found it impossible to fix his attention on the service. The lights at the altar burnt dimly in his eyes—the loud antiphon and the supplicatory prayer fell upon a listless ear. His whole life was passing in review before him. He saw himself as he was when he first professed his faith, and felt the zeal and holy aspirations that filled him then. Years flew by at a glance, and he found himself sub-deacon; the sub-deacon became deacon; and the deacon, sub-prior; and the end of his ambition seemed plain before him. But he had a rival; his fears told him a superior in zeal and learning; one who, though many years younger than he, had risen so rapidly in favour with the ecclesiastical authorities, that he threatened to outstrip him, even now, when the goal was full in view. The darkest passage of his life approached: a crime which should cast a deep shadow over the whole of his brilliant after-career. He would have shunned its contemplation, if he could. In vain. It stood out more palpably than all the rest. His rival was no longer in his path. How he was removed the abbot did not dare to think. But he was gone for ever, unless the tall monk were he!

Unable to endure this terrible retrospect, Paslew strove to bend his thoughts on other things. The choir was singing the "*Dies Iræ*," and their voices thundered forth:—

Rex tremendæ majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me fons pietatis!

Fain would the abbot have closed his ears, and hoping to stifle the remorseful pangs that seized upon his very vitals with the sharpness of serpents' teeth, he strove to dwell upon the frequent and severe acts of

penance he had performed. But he now found that his penitence had never been sincere and efficacious. This one damning sin obscured all his good actions; and he felt if he died unconfessed, and with the weight of guilt upon his soul, he should perish everlastingly. Again he fled from the torment of retrospection, and again heard the choir thundering forth—

Lacrymosa dies illa,	Judicandus homo reus.	Pie Jesu Domine!
Quâ resurget ex favillâ	Huic ergo parce, Deus!	Dona eis requiem.

"Amen!" exclaimed the abbot. And bowing his head to the ground, he earnestly repeated—

"Pie Jesu Domine!
Dona eis requiem."

Then he looked up, and resolved to ask for a confessor, and unburden his soul without delay.

The offertory and post-communion were over; the "*requiescant in pace*"—awful words addressed to living ears—were pronounced; and the mass was ended.

All prepared to depart. The prior descended from the altar to embrace and take leave of the abbot; and, at the same time, the Earl of Derby came from the stall.

"Has all been done to your satisfaction, John Paslew?" demanded the earl, as he drew near.

"All, my good lord," replied the abbot, lowly inclining his head; "and I pray you think me not importunate, if I prefer one other request. I would fain have a confessor visit me, that I may lay bare my inmost heart to him, and receive absolution."

"I have already anticipated the request," replied the earl, "and have provided a priest for you. He shall attend you, within an hour, in your own chamber. You will have ample time between this and daybreak to settle your accounts with Heaven, should they be ever so weighty."

"I trust so, my lord," replied Paslew; "but a whole life is scarcely long enough for repentance, much less a few short hours. But in regard to the confessor," he continued, filled with misgiving by the earl's manner, "I should be glad to be shriven by Father Christopher Smith, late prior of the abbey."

"It may not be," replied the earl, sternly and decidedly. "You will find all you can require in him I shall send."

The abbot sighed, seeing that remonstrance was useless.

"One further question I would address to you, my lord," he said, "and that refers to the place of my interment. Beneath our feet lie buried all my predecessors—Abbots of Whalley. Here lies John Eccles, for whom was carved the stall in which your lordship hath sat, and from which I have been dethroned. Here rests the learned John Lyndelay, fifth abbot; and beside him his immediate predecessor, Robert de Topcliffe, who, two hundred and thirty years ago, on the festival of Saint Gregory, our canonised abbot, commenced the erection of the sacred edifice above us. At that epoch were here enshrined the remains of the saintly Gregory, and here were also brought the bodies of Helias de Workesley and John de Belfield, both prelates of piety and wisdom. You may read the names where you stand, my lord. You may count the graves of all the abbots. They are sixteen in number. There is one grave yet unoccupied—one stone yet unfurnished with an effigy in brass."

"Well?" said the Earl of Derby.

"When I sat in that stall, my lord," pursued Paslew, pointing to the abbot's chair: when I was head of this church, it was my thought to rest here among my brother abbots."

"You have forfeited the right," replied the earl, sternly. "All the abbots, whose dust is crumbling beneath us, died in the odour of sanctity; loyal to their sovereigns, and true to their country; whereas you will die an attainted felon and rebel. You can have no place amongst them. Concern not yourself further in the matter. I will find a fitting grave for you,—perchance at the foot of the gallows."

And turning abruptly away, he gave the signal for general departure.

Ere the clock in the church tower had tolled one, the lights were extinguished, and of the priestly train who had recently thronged the fane, all were gone, like a troop of ghosts evoked at midnight by necromantic skill, and then suddenly dismissed. Deep silence again brooded in the aisles; hushed was the organ; mute the melodious choir. The only light penetrating the convent church proceeded from the moon, whose rays, shining through the painted windows, fell upon the graves of the old abbots in the presbytery, and on the two biers within the adjoining chapel, whose stark burdens they quickened into fearful semblance of life.

Chapter VI.

TETER ET FORTIS CARCER.

Left alone, and unable to pray, the abbot strove to dissipate his agitation of spirit by walking to and fro within his chamber; and while thus occupied, he was interrupted by a guard, who told him that the priest sent by the Earl of Derby was without, and immediately afterwards the confessor was ushered in. It was the tall monk, who had been standing between the biers, and his features were still shrouded by his cowl. At sight of him, Paslew sank upon a seat, and buried his face in his hands. The monk offered him no consolation, but waited in silence till he should again look up. At last Paslew took courage and spoke.

"Who, and what are you?" he demanded.

"A brother of the same order as yourself," replied the monk, in deep and thrilling accents, but without raising his hood; "and I am come to hear your confession by command of the Earl of Derby."

"Are you of this abbey?" asked Paslew, tremblingly.

"I was," replied the monk, in a stern tone; "but the monastery is dissolved, and all the brethren ejected."

"Your name?" cried Paslew.

"I am not come here to answer questions, but to hear a confession," rejoined the monk. "Bethink you of the awful situation in which you are placed, and that before many hours you must answer for the sins you have committed. You have yet time for repentance, if you delay it not."

"You are right, father," replied the abbot. "Be seated, I pray you, and listen to me, for I have much to tell. Thirty and one years ago I was prior of this abbey. Up to that period my life had been blameless, or if not wholly free from fault, I had little wherewith to reproach myself—little to fear from a merciful judge—unless it were that I indulged too strongly the desire of ruling absolutely in the house in which I was then

only second. But Satan had laid a snare for me, into which I blindly fell. Among the brethren was one named Borlace Alvetham, a young man of rare attainment, and singular skill in the occult sciences. He had risen in favour, and at the time I speak of was elected sub-prior."

"Go on," said the monk.

"It began to be whispered about within the abbey," pursued Paslew, "that on the death of William Rede," then abbot, Borlace Alvetham would succeed him, and then it was that bitter feelings of animosity were awakened in my breast against the sub-prior, and after many struggles, I resolved upon his destruction."

"A wicked resolution," cried the monk; "but proceed."

"I pondered over the means of accomplishing my purpose," resumed Paslew, "and at last decided upon accusing Alvetham of sorcery and magical practices. The accusation was easy, for the occult studies in which he indulged laid him open to the charge. He occupied a chamber overlooking the Calder, and used to break the monastic rules by wandering forth at night upon the hills. When he was absent thus one night, accompanied by others of the brethren, I visited his chamber, and examined his papers, some of which were covered with mystical figures and cabalistic characters. These papers I seized, and a watch was set to make prisoner of Alvetham on his return. Before dawn he appeared, and was instantly secured, and placed in close confinement. On the next day he was brought before the assembled conclave in the chapter-house, and examined. His defence was unavailing. I charged him with the terrible crime of witchcraft, and he was found guilty."

A hollow groan broke from the monk, but he offered no other interruption.

"He was condemned to die a fearful and lingering death," pursued the abbot; "and it devolved upon me to see the sentence carried out."

"And no pity for the innocent moved you?" cried the monk. "You had no compunction?"

"None," replied the abbot. "I rather rejoiced in the successful accomplishment of my scheme. The prey was fairly in my toils, and I would give him no chance of escape. Not to bring scandal upon the abbey, it was decided that Alvetham's punishment should be secret."

"A wise resolve," observed the monk.

"Within the thickness of the dormitory walls is contrived a small, singularly-formed dungeon," continued the abbot. "It consists of an arched cell, just large enough to hold the body of a captive, and permit him to stretch himself upon a straw pallet. A narrow staircase mounts upwards to a grated aperture in one of the buttresses to admit air and light. Other opening is there none. '*Teter et fortis carcer*' is this dungeon styled, in our monastic rolls, and it is well described, for it is black and strong enough. Food is admitted to the miserable inmate of the cell by means of a revolving stone, but no interchange of speech can be held with those without. A large stone is removed from the wall to admit the prisoner, and once immured, the masonry is mortised, and made solid as before. The wretched captive does not long survive his doom, or it may be he lives too long, for death must be a release from such protracted misery. In this dark cell one of the evil-minded brethren, who essayed to stab the Abbot of Kirkstall in the chapter-house, was thrust, and ere a year was over, the provisions were untouched—and the

man being known to be dead, they were stayed. His skeleton was found within the cell when it was opened to admit Borlace Alvetham."

"Poor captive!" groaned the monk.

"Ay, poor captive!" echoed Paslew. "Mine eyes have often striven to pierce those stone walls, and see him lying there in that narrow chamber, or forcing his way upwards to catch a glimpse of the blue sky above him. When I have seen the swallows settle on the old buttress, or the thin grass growing between the stones waving there, I have thought of him."

"Go on," said the monk.

"I scarce can proceed," rejoined Paslew. "Little time was allowed Alvetham for preparation. That very night the fearful sentence was carried out. The stone was removed, and a new pallet placed in the cell. At midnight the prisoner was brought to the dormitory, the brethren chanting a doleful hymn. There he stood amidst them, his tall form towering above the rest, and his features pale as death. He protested his innocence, but he exhibited no fear, even when he saw the terrible preparations. When all was ready he was led to the breach. At that awful moment, his eye met mine, and I shall never forget the look. I might have saved him if I had spoken, but I would not speak. I turned away, and he was thrust into the breach. A fearful cry then rang in my ears, but it was instantly drowned by the mallets of the masons employed to fasten up the stone."

There was a pause for a few moments, broken only by the sobs of the abbot. At length, the monk spoke.

"And the prisoner perished in the cell?" he demanded, in a hollow voice.

"I thought so till to-night," replied the abbot. "But if he escaped it, it must have been by miracle; or by aid of those powers with whom he was charged with holding commerce."

"He did escape!" thundered the monk, throwing back his hood. "Look up, John Paslew. Look up, false abbot, and recognise thy victim."

"Borlace Alvetham!" cried the abbot. "Is it, indeed, you?"

"You see, and can you doubt?" replied the other. "But you shall now hear how I avoided the terrible death to which you procured my condemnation. You shall now learn how I am here to repay the wrong you did me. We have changed places, John Paslew, since the night when I was thrust into the cell, never, as you hoped, to come forth. You are now the criminal, and I the witness of the punishment."

"Forgive me! oh, forgive me! Borlace Alvetham, since you are, indeed, he!" cried the abbot, falling on his knees.

"Arise, John Paslew!" cried the other, sternly. "Arise, and listen to me. For the damning offences into which I have been led, I hold you responsible. But for you I might have died free from sin. It is fit you should know the amount of my iniquity. Give ear to me, I say. When first shut within that dungeon, I yielded to the promptings of despair. Cursing you, I threw myself upon the pallet, resolved to taste no food, and hoping death would soon release me. But love of life prevailed. On the second day I took the bread and water allotted me, and ate and drank; after which I scaled the narrow staircase, and gazed through the thin-barred loophole at the bright blue sky above, sometimes catching

only second. But Satan had laid a snare for me, into which I blindly fell. Among the brethren was one named Borlace Alvetham, a young man of rare attainment, and singular skill in the occult sciences. He had risen in favour, and at the time I speak of was elected sub-prior."

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"He was condemned to die a fearful and lingering death," pursued the abbot; "and it devolved upon me to see the sentence carried out."

"And no pity for the innocent moved you?" cried the monk. "You had no compunction?"

"None," replied the abbot. "I rather rejoiced in the successful accomplishment of my scheme. The prey was fairly in my toils, and I would give him no chance of escape. Not to bring scandal upon the abbey, it was decided that Alvetham's punishment should be secret."

"A wise resolve," observed the monk.

"Within the thickness of the dormitory walls is contrived a small, singularly-formed dungeon," continued the abbot. "It consists of an arched cell, just large enough to hold the body of a captive, and permit him to stretch himself upon a straw pallet. A narrow staircase mounts upwards to a grated aperture in one of the buttresses to admit air and light. Other opening is there none. '*Teter et fortis carcer*' is this dungeon styled, in our monastic rolls, and it is well described, for it is black and strong enough. Food is admitted to the miserable inmate of the cell by means of a revolving stone, but no interchange of speech can be held with those without. A large stone is removed from the wall to admit the prisoner, and once immured, the masonry is mortised, and made solid as before. The wretched captive does not long survive his doom, or it may be he lives too long, for death must be a release from such protracted misery. In this dark cell one of the evil-minded brethren, who essayed to stab the Abbot of Kirkstall in the chapter-house, was thrust, and ere a year was over, the provisions were untouched—and the

man being known to be dead, they were stayed. His skeleton was found within the cell when it was opened to admit Borlace Alvetham."

"Poor captive!" groaned the monk.

"Ay, poor captive!" echoed Paslew. "Mine eyes have often striven to pierce those stone walls, and see him lying there in that narrow chamber, or forcing his way upwards to catch a glimpse of the blue sky above him. When I have seen the swallows settle on the old buttress, or the thin grass growing between the stones waving there, I have thought of him."

"Go on," said the monk.

"I scarce can proceed," rejoined Paslew. "Little time was allowed Alvetham for preparation. That very night the fearful sentence was carried out. The stone was removed, and a new pallet placed in the cell. At midnight the prisoner was brought to the dormitory, the brethren chanting a doleful hymn. There he stood amidst them, his tall form towering above the rest, and his features pale as death. He protested his innocence, but he exhibited no fear, even when he saw the terrible preparations. When all was ready he was led to the breach. At that awful moment, his eye met mine, and I shall never forget the look. I might have saved him if I had spoken, but I would not speak. I turned away, and he was thrust into the breach. A fearful cry then rang in my ears, but it was instantly drowned by the mallets of the masons employed to fasten up the stone."

There was a pause for a few moments, broken only by the sobs of the abbot. At length, the monk spoke.

"And the prisoner perished in the cell?" he demanded, in a hollow voice.

"I thought so till to-night," replied the abbot. "But if he escaped it, it must have been by miracle; or by aid of those powers with whom he was charged with holding commerce."

"He did escape!" thundered the monk, throwing back his hood. "Look up, John Paslew. Look up, false abbot, and recognise thy victim."

"Borlace Alvetham!" cried the abbot. "Is it, indeed, you?"

"You see, and can you doubt?" replied the other. "But you shall now hear how I avoided the terrible death to which you procured my condemnation. You shall now learn how I am here to repay the wrong you did me. We have changed places, John Paslew, since the night when I was thrust into the cell, never, as you hoped, to come forth. You are now the criminal, and I the witness of the punishment."

"Forgive me! oh, forgive me! Borlace Alvetham, since you are, indeed, he!" cried the abbot, falling on his knees.

"Arise, John Paslew!" cried the other, sternly. "Arise, and listen to me. For the damning offences into which I have been led, I hold you responsible. But for you I might have died free from sin. It is fit you should know the amount of my iniquity. Give ear to me, I say. When first shut within that dungeon, I yielded to the promptings of despair. Cursing you, I threw myself upon the pallet, resolved to taste no food, and hoping death would soon release me. But love of life prevailed. On the second day I took the bread and water allotted me, and ate and drank; after which I scaled the narrow staircase, and gazed through the thin-barred loophole at the bright blue sky above, sometimes catching

the shadow of a bird as it flew past. Oh! how I yearned for freedom then! Oh, how I wished to break through the stone walls that held me fast! Oh, what a weight of despair crushed my heart as I crept back to my narrow bed. The cell seemed like a grave, and indeed it was little better. Horrible thoughts possessed me. What if I should be wilfully forgotten? What if no food should be given me, and I should be left to perish by the slow pangs of hunger? At this idea I shrieked aloud, but the walls alone returned a dull echo to my cries. I beat my hands against the stones, till the blood flowed from them, but no answer was returned; and at last I desisted from sheer exhaustion. Day after day, and night after night, passed in this way. My food regularly came. But I became maddened by solitude; and with terrible imprecations invoked aid from the powers of darkness to set me free. One night, while thus employed, I was startled by a mocking voice, which said,

"'All this fury is needless. Thou hast only to wish for me, and I come.'

"It was profoundly dark. I could see nothing but a pair of red orbs, glowing like flaming carbuncles.

"'Thou wouldst be free,' continued the voice. 'Thou shalt be so. Arise, and follow me.'

"At this, I felt myself grasped by an iron arm, against which all resistance would have been unavailing, even if I had dared to offer it, and in an instant I was dragged up the narrow steps. The stone wall opened before my unseen conductor, and in another moment we were upon the roof of the dormitory. By the bright starbeams shooting down from above, I discerned a tall shadowy figure standing by my side.

"'Thou art mine,' he cried, in accents graven for ever on my memory; 'but I am a generous master, and will give thee a long term of freedom. Thou shalt be avenged upon thine enemy—deeply avenged.'

"'Grant this, and I am thine,' I replied, a spirit of infernal vengeance possessing me. And I knelt before the fiend.

"'But thou must tarry for awhile,' he answered, 'for thine enemy's time will be long in coming; but it *will* come. I cannot work him immediate harm; but I will lead him to a height from which he will assuredly fall headlong. Thou must depart from this place; for it is perilous to thee, and if thou stayest here, ill will befall thee. I will send a rat to thy dungeon, which shall daily devour the provisions, so that the monks shall not know thou hast fled. In thirty and one years shall the abbot's doom be accomplished. Two years before that time thou mayst return. Then come alone to Pendle Hill on a Friday night, and beat the water of the moss pool on the summit, and I will appear to thee and tell thee more. Nine and twenty years, remember!'

"With these words the shadowy figure melted away, and I found myself standing alone on the mossy roof of the dormitory. The cold stars were shining down upon me, and I heard the howl of the watch-dogs near the gate. The fair abbey slept in beauty around me, and I gnashed my teeth with rage to think that you had made me an outcast from it, and robbed me of a dignity which might have been mine. I was wroth also that my vengeance should be so long delayed. But I could not remain where I was, so I clambered down the buttress, and fled away."

"Can this be?" cried the abbot, who had listened in rapt wonderment to the narration. "Two years after your immurement in the cell, the

food having been for some time untouched, the wall was opened, and upon the pallet was found a decayed carcase in mouldering, monkish vestments."

"It was a body taken from the charnel, and placed there by the demon," replied the monk. "Of my long wanderings in other lands and beneath brighter skies I need not tell you; but neither absence nor lapse of years cooled my desire of vengeance, and when the appointed time drew nigh I returned to my own country, and came hither in a lowly garb, under the name of Nicholas Demdike."

"Ha!" exclaimed the abbot.

"I went to Pendle Hill, as directed," pursued the monk, "and saw the Dark Shape there as I beheld it on the dormitory roof. All things were then told me, and I learnt how the late rebellion should rise, and how it should be crushed. I learnt also how my vengeance should be satisfied."

Paslew groaned aloud. A brief pause ensued, and deep emotion marked the accents of the wizard as he proceeded.

"When I came back, all this part of Lancashire resounded with praises of the beauty of Bess Blackburn, a rustic lass who dwelt in Barrowford. She was called the Flower of Pendle, and inflamed all the youths with love, and all the maidens with jealousy. But she favoured none, except Cuthbert Ashbead, forester to the Abbot of Whalley. Her mother would fain have given her to the forester in marriage, but Bess would not be disposed of so easily. I saw her, and became at once enamoured. I thought my heart was seared; but it was not so. The savage beauty of Bess pleased me more than the most refined charms could have done, and her fierce character harmonised with my own. How I won her matters not, but she cast off all thoughts of Ashbead, and clung to me. My wild life suited her; and she roamed the wastes with me, scaled the hills in my company, and shrank not from the weird meetings I attended. Ill repute quickly attended her, and she became branded as a witch. Her aged mother closed her doors upon her, and those who would have gone miles to meet her, now avoided her. Bess heeded this little. She was of a nature to repay the world's contumely with like scorn, but when her child was born the case became different. She wished to save it. Then it was," pursued Demdike, vehemently, and regarding the abbot with flashing eyes—"then it was that I was again mortally injured by you. Then your ruthless decree to the clergy went forth. My child was denied baptism, and became subject to the fiend."

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed Paslew.

"And as if this were not injury enough," thundered Demdike, "you have called down a withering and lasting curse upon its innocent head, and through it transfixed its mother's heart. If you had complied with that poor girl's request, I would have forgiven you your wrong to me, and have saved you."

There was a long, fearful silence. At last Demdike advanced to the abbot, and seizing his arm, fixed his eyes upon him, as if to search into his soul.

"Answer me, John Paslew!" he cried; "answer me, as you shall speedily answer your Maker. Can that malediction be recalled? Dare not to trifle with me, or I will tear forth your black heart, and cast it in your face. Can that curse be recalled? Speak!"

"It cannot," replied the abbot, half dead with terror.

"Away, then!" thundered Demdike, casting him from him. "To the gallows!—to the gallows!" And he rushed out of the room.

Chapter VII.

THE ABBEY MILL.

For a while the abbot remained shattered and stupified by this terrible interview. At length he arose, and made his way, he scarce knew how, to the oratory. But it was long before the tumult of his thoughts could be at all allayed, and he had only just regained something like composure when he was disturbed by hearing a slight sound in the adjoining chamber. A mortal chill came over him, for he thought it might be Demdike returned. Presently, he distinguished a footstep stealthily approaching him, and almost hoped that the wizard would consummate his vengeance by taking his life. But he was quickly undeceived, for a hand was placed on his shoulder, and a friendly voice whispered in his ears, "Cum along wi' me, lort abbut. Get up, quick—quick!"

Thus addressed, the abbot raised his eyes, and beheld a rustic figure standing beside him, divested of his clouted shoes, and armed with a long bare wood-knife.

"Dunna yo knoa me, lort abbut?" cried the person. "Ey'm a freent—Hal o' Nabs, o' Wiswall. Yo'n moind Wiswall, yeawr own birthplace, abbut? Dunna be feert, ey sey. Ey'n getten a steeigh clapt to yon windaw, an' you con be down it i' a trice—an' along t' covert way be t' river soide to t' mill."

But the abbot stirred not.

"Quick! quick!" implored Hal o' Nabs, venturing to pluck the abbot's sleeve. "Every minute's precious. Dunna be feert. Ebil Croft, t' miller, is below. Poor Cuthbert Ashbead would ha' been here i'stead o' meh if he couldn; boh that accursed wizard, Nick Demdike, turned my hont agen him, and drove t' poike-head intended for himself into poor Cuthbert's side. They clapt meh i' a dungeon, boh Ebil monaged to get me out, an ey then swore to do whot poor Cuthbert would ha' done if he'd been livin'—so here ey am, lort abbut, cum to set yo free. An neaw yo knoan aw abowt it, yo con ha nah more hesitation. Cum, time presses, an ey'm feert o' t' guard owerhearing us."

"I thank you, my good friend, from the bottom of my heart," replied the abbot, rising; "but, however strong may be the temptation of life and liberty which you hold out to me, I cannot yield to it. I have pledged my word to the Earl of Derby to make no attempt to escape. Were the doors thrown open, and the guard removed, I should remain where I am."

"Whot!" exclaimed Hal o' Nabs, in a tone of bitter disappointment; "yo winnaw go, neaw aw's prepared. By th' Mess, boh yo shan. Ey'st nah go back to Ebil empty-handed. If yo'n sworn to stay here, ey'n sworn to set yo free, and ey'st keep meh oath. Willy nilly, yo shan go wi' meh, lort abbut!"

"Forbear to urge me further, my good Hal," rejoined Paslew. "I fully appreciate your devotion; and I only regret that you and Abel Croft have exposed yourselves to so much peril on my account. Poor Cuthbert Ashbead! when I beheld his body on the bier, I had a sad feeling that he had died in my behalf."

"Cuthbert meant to rescue yo, lort abbut," replied Hal, "an deed resisting Nick Demdike's attempt to arrest him. Boh, be aw t' devils!"

he added, brandishing his knife fiercely, "t' warlock shall ha' three inches o' cowd steel betwixt his ribs, t' furst time ey cum across him."

"Peace, my son," rejoined the abbot, "and forego your bloody design. Leave the wretched man to the chastisement of Heaven. And now, farewell! All your kindly efforts to induce me to fly are vain."

"Yo winnaw go?" cried Hal o' Nabs, scratching his head.

"I cannot," replied the abbot.

"Cum wi' meh to t' windaw, then," pursued Hal, "and tell Ebil so. He'll think ey'n failed else."

"Willingly," replied the abbot.

And with noiseless footsteps he followed the other across the chamber. The window was open, and outside it was reared a ladder.

"Yo mun go down a few steps," said Hal o' Nabs, "or else he'll nah hear yo."

The abbot complied, and partly descended the ladder.

"I see no one," he said.

"T' neet's dark," replied Hal o' Nabs, who was close behind him. "Ebil canna be far off. Hist! ey hear him—go on."

The abbot was now obliged to comply, though he did so with reluctance. Presently he found himself upon the roof of a building, which he knew to be connected with the mill by a covered passage running along the south bank of the Calder. Scarcely had he set foot there, than Hal o' Nabs jumped after him, and, seizing the ladder, cast it into the stream, thus rendering Paslew's return impossible.

"Neaw, lort abbut," he cried, with a low, exulting laugh, "yo hanna brok'n yor word, an ey'n kept moine. Yo're free agen your will."

"You have destroyed me by your mistaken zeal," cried the abbot, reproachfully.

"Nowt o't sort," replied Hal; "ey'n saved yo' fro' destruction. This way, lort abbut—this way."

And taking Paslew's arm he led him to a low parapet, overlooking the covered passage before described. Half an hour before it had been bright moonlight, but, as if to favour the fugitive, the heavens had become overcast, and a thick mist had arisen from the river.

"Ebil! Ebil!" cried Hal o' Nabs, leaning over the parapet.

"Here," replied a voice below. "Is aw reet? Is he wi' yo?"

"Yeigh," replied Hal.

"Whot han yo dun wi' t' steigh?" cried Abel.

"Never yo moind," returned Hal, "boh help t' abbut down."

Paslew thought it vain to resist further, and with the help of Hal o' Nabs and the miller, and further aided by some irregularities in the wall, he was soon safely landed near the entrance of the passage. Abel fell on his knees, and pressed the abbot's hand to his lips.

"Owr Blessed Leady be praised, yo are free," he cried.

"Dunna stond tawking here, Ebil," interposed Hal o' Nabs, who by this time had reached the ground, and who was fearful of some new remonstrance on the abbot's part. "Ey'm feerd o' pursuit."

"Yo needna be afeerd o' that, Hal," replied the miller. "T' guard are safe enough. One o' owr chaps has just tuk em up a big black jack fu' o' stout ele; an ey warrant me they winnaw stir yet awhoile. Win it please yo to cum wi' me, lort abbut?"

With this, he marched along the passage, followed by the others, and

presently arrived at a door, against which he tapped. A bolt being withdrawn, it was instantly opened to admit the party, after which it was as quickly shut and secured. In answer to a call from the miller, a light appeared at the top of a steep ladder-like flight of wooden steps, and up these Paslew, at the entreaty of Abel, mounted, and found himself in a large, low chamber, the roof of which was crossed by great beams, covered thickly with cobwebs, whitened by flour, while the floor was strewn with empty sacks and sieves.

The person who held the light proved to be the miller's daughter, Dorothy, a blooming lass of eighteen, and at the other end of the chamber, seated on a bench before a turf fire, with an infant on her knees, was the miller's wife. The latter instantly arose on beholding the abbot, and placing the child on a corn-bin, advanced towards him, and dropped on her knees, while her daughter imitated her example. The abbot extended his hands over them, and pronounced a solemn benediction.

"Bring your child, also, to me, that I may bless it," he said, when he concluded.

"It's nah my child, lort abbut," replied the miller's wife, taking up the infant and bringing it to him; "it wur brought to me this varry neet by Ebil. Ey wish it wur far enough, ey'm sure, for it's a deformed little urchon. One o' its een is lower set than t' other; an t' reet looks up, while t' laft looks down."

And as she spoke she pointed to the infant's face, which was disfigured as she had stated, by a strange and unnatural disposition of the eyes, one of which was set much lower in the head than the other. Awakened from sleep, the child uttered a feeble cry, and stretched out its tiny arms to Dorothy.

"You ought to pity it for its deformity, poor little creature, rather than reproach it, mother," observed the young damsel.

"Marry kem eawt!" cried her mother, sharply, "yo'n getten fine feelings wi' your larning fro t' good feythers, Dolly. Os ey said efore, ey wish t' brat wur far enough."

"You forget it has no mother," suggested Dorothy, kindly.

"An naw great matter, if it hasn't," returned the miller's wife. "Bess Demdike's neaw great loss."

"Is this Bess Demdike's child?" cried Paslew, recoiling.

"Yeigh," exclaimed the miller's wife. And mistaking the cause of Paslew's emotion, she added, triumphantly, to her daughter, "Ey towd te, wench, ot t' lort abbut would be of my way o' thinking. T' chilt has got the witch's mark plain upon her. Look, lort abbut, look!"

But Paslew heeded her not, but murmured to himself—

"Ever in my path, go where I will. It is vain to struggle with my fate. I will go back and surrender myself to the Earl of Derby."

"Nah,—nah!—yo shanna do that," replied Hal o' Nabs, who, with the miller, was close beside him. "Sit down o' that stoo' be t' fire, and tak a cup o' wine t' cheer yo, and then we'n set out to Pendle Forest, where ey'st find yo a safe hiding-place. An t' ony reward ey'n ever ask for t' sarvice shan be, that yo'n perform a marriage sarvice fo' me and Dolly one of these days." And he nudged the damsel's elbow, who turned away, covered with blushes.

The abbot moved mechanically to the fire, and sat down, while the miller's wife, surrendering the child with a shrug of the shoulders and a grimace to her daughter, went in search of some viands and a flask of wine,

which she set before Paslew. The miller then filled a drinking-horn, and presented it to his guest, who was about to raise it to his lips, when a loud knocking was heard at the door below.

The knocking continued with increased violence, and voices were heard calling upon the miller to open the door, or it would be broken down. On the first alarm Abel had flown to a small window whence he could reconnoitre those below, and he now returned with a face white with terror, to say that a party of arquebussiers, with the sheriff at their head, were without, and that some of the men were provided with torches.

"They have discovered my evasion, and are come in search of me," observed the abbot, rising, but without betraying any anxiety. "Do not concern yourselves further for me, my good friends, but open the door, and deliver me to them."

"Nah, nah, that we winnaw," cried Hal o' Nabs; "yo're neaw taken yet, feayther abbut, an' ey knoa a way to baffle 'em. If yo'n let him down into t' river, Ebil, ey'n manage to get him off."

"Weel thowt on, Nab," cried the miller; "theawst nah been mey mon seven year fo nowt. Theaw knoas t' ways o' t' pleck."

"Os weel os ony rotten abowt it," replied Hal o' Nabs. "Go down to t' grindin'-room, an ey'n follow i' a troice."

And as Abel snatched up the light, and hastily descended the steps with Paslew, Hal whispered in Dorothy's ears,—

"Tak care neaw one fonds that chilt, Dolly, if they break in. Hide it safely; an whon they're gone, tak' it to't church, and place it near t' altar, where no ill con cum to it or thee. Mey life may hong upon it."

And as the poor girl, who, as well as her mother, was almost frightened out of her wits, promised compliance, he hurried down the steps after the others, muttering, as the clamour without was redoubled,

"Eigh, roar on till yo're hoarse. Yo winnaw get in yet awhile, ey'n promise ye."

Meantime, the abbot had been led to the chief room of the mill, where all the corn formerly consumed within the monastery had been prepared, and which the size of the chamber itself, together with the vastness of the stones used in the operation of grinding, and connected with the huge water-wheel outside, proved to be by no means inconsiderable. Strong shafts of timber supported the flooring above, and were crossed by other boards placed horizontally, from which various implements in use at the mill depended, giving the chamber, imperfectly lighted as it now was by the lamp borne by Abel, a strange and almost mysterious appearance. Three or four of the miller's men, armed with pikes, had followed their master, and, though much alarmed, they vowed to die rather than give up the abbot.

By this time Hal o' Nabs had joined the group, and proceeding towards a raised part of the chamber where the grinding-stones were set, he knelt down, and laying hold of a small ring, raised up a trap-door. The fresh air which blew up through the aperture, combined with the rushing sound of water, showed that the Calder flowed immediately beneath; and having made some slight preparation, Hal let himself down into the stream.

At this moment a loud crash was heard, and one of the miller's men cried out that the arquebussiers had burst open the door.

"Be hondy, then, lads, and let him down!" cried Hal o' Nabs, who

had some difficulty in maintaining his footing on the rough, stony bottom of the swift stream.

Passively yielding, the abbot suffered the miller and one of the stoutest of his men to assist him through the trap-door, while a third held down the lamp, and showed Hal o' Nabs up to his middle in the darkling current, and stretching out his arms to receive the burden. The light fell upon the huge black circle of the water-wheel now stopped, and upon the dripping arches supporting the mill. In another moment the abbot plunged into the water, the trap-door was replaced, and bolted underneath by Hal, who, while guiding his companion along, and bidding him catch hold of the woodwork of the wheel, heard a heavy trampling of many feet on the boards above, showing that the pursuers had obtained admittance.

Encumbered by his heavy vestments, the abbot could with difficulty contend against the strong current, and he momently expected to be swept away; but he had a stout and active assistant by his side, who soon placed him under shelter of the wheel. The trampling overhead continued for a few minutes, after which all was quiet, and Hal judged that, finding their search within ineffectual, the enemy would speedily come forth. Nor was he deceived. Shouts were soon heard at the door of the mill, and the glare of torches was cast on the stream. Then it was that Hal dragged his companion into a deep hole, formed by some decay in the masonry, behind the wheel, where the water rose nearly to their chins, and where they were completely concealed. Scarcely were they thus ensconced, than two or three armed men, holding torches aloft, were seen wading under the archway; but after looking carefully around, and even approaching close to the water-wheel, these persons could detect nothing, and withdrew, muttering curses of rage and disappointment. By-and-by the lights almost wholly disappeared, and the shouts becoming fainter and more distant, it was evident that the men had gone lower down the river. Upon this, Hal thought they might venture to quit their retreat, and accordingly, grasping the abbot's arm, he proceeded to wade up the stream.

Benumbed with cold, and half dead with terror, Paslew needed all his companion's support, for he could do little to help himself, added to which, they occasionally encountered some large stone, or stepped into a deep hole, so that it required Hal's utmost exertion and strength to force a way on. At last they were out of the arch, and though both banks seemed unguarded, yet, for fear of surprise, Hal deemed it prudent still to keep to the river. Their course was completely sheltered from observation by the mist that enveloped them; and after proceeding in this way for some distance, Hal stopped to listen, and while debating with himself whether he should now quit the river, he fancied he beheld a black object swimming towards him. Taking it for an otter, with which voracious animal the Calder, a stream swarming with trout, abounded, and knowing the creature would not meddle with them, unless first attacked, he paid little attention to it; but he was soon made sensible of his error. His arm was suddenly seized by a large black hound, whose sharp fangs met in his flesh. Unable to repress a cry of pain, Hal strove to disengage himself from his assailant, and finding it impossible, flung himself into the water, in the hope of drowning him, but as the hound still maintained his hold, he searched for his knife to slay him. But he could not find it, and in his distress applied to Paslew.

"Ha yo onny weapon abowt yo, lort abbut," he cried, "wi' which ey con free mysel' fro' this accussed hound?"

"Alas! no, my son," replied Paslew, "and I fear no weapon will prevail against it, for I recognise in the animal the hound of the wizard Demdike."

"Ey thowt t' Dule wur in it," rejoined Hal; "boh leave me to fight it owt, an do yo gain t' bonk, an mey t' best o' your way to t' Wiswall. Ey'n join ye os soon os ey con scrush this varment's heaod agen a stoan. Ha!" he added, joyfully, "Ey'n found t' thwittle. Go—go. Ey'n soon be efter ye."

Feeling he should sink if he remained where he was, and wholly unable to offer any effectual assistance to his companion, the abbot turned to the left, where a large oak overhung the stream, and he was climbing the bank, aided by the roots of the tree, when a man suddenly came from behind it, seized his hand, and dragged him up forcibly. At the same moment his captor placed a bugle to his lips, and winding a few notes, he was instantly answered by shouts, and soon afterwards half-a-dozen armed men ran up, bearing torches. Not a word passed between the fugitive and his captor, but when the men came up, and the torchlight fell upon the features of the latter, the abbot's worst fears were realised. It was Demdike.

"False to your king!—false to your oath!—false to all men!" cried the wizard. "You seek to escape in vain!"

"I merit all your reproaches," replied the abbot; "but it may be some satisfaction to you to learn that I have endured far greater suffering than if I had patiently awaited my doom."

"I am glad of it," rejoined Demdike, with a savage laugh; "but you have destroyed others beside yourself. Where is the fellow in the water? What, ho, Uriel!"

But as no sound reached him, he snatched a torch from one of the arquebussiers and held it to the river's brink. But he could see neither hound nor man.

"Strange!" he cried. "He cannot have escaped. Uriel is more than a match for any man. Secure the prisoner while I examine the stream."

With this, he ran along the bank with great quickness, holding his torch far over the water, so as to reveal anything floating within it, but nothing met his view until he came within a short distance of the mill, when he beheld a black object struggling in the current, and soon found that it was his dog making feeble efforts to gain the bank.

"Ah, recreant! thou hast let him go," cried Demdike, furiously.

Seeing his master the animal redoubled its efforts, crept ashore, and fell at his feet, with a last effort to lick his hands.

Demdike held down the torch, and then perceived that the hound was quite dead. There was a deep gash in its side, and another in the throat, showing how it had perished.

"Poor Uriel!" he exclaimed; "the only true friend I had. And thou art gone! The villain has killed thee, but he shall pay for it with his life."

And hurrying back, he despatched four of the men in quest of the fugitive, while, accompanied by the two others, he conveyed Paslew back to the abbey, where he was placed in a strong cell, from which there was no possibility of escape, and a guard set over him.

FITS OF GLOOM.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

Fits of gloom—miserable moments—brief periods of wretchedness, arising out of very slight and trivial causes, occasionally, I believe, assail us all. We are conscious of there being no good reason for our sadness, yet the feeling of melancholy steals over us, and settles upon us, and we shrink beneath it. A peculiar kind of day is very influential in casting us into this dreary state. A day in winter, dark and dismal, when it rains incessantly, and there is not the least sign of brighter weather, will, ordinarily speaking, produce a frightful effect upon the spirits. We begin to think of human woes generally, and of our especial sorrows, of the shortness of life, and of the amazing amount of unhappiness crammed into existence, brief as it is; we think of an old friend who died last year of apoplexy, and mentally remark to ourselves we shouldn't wonder if we went off suddenly some day or other in the same way; we gloomily view the fact that our acquaintance Jones, who not long ago was keeping his carriage, is now in an almshouse. Who knows? that may be our fate! Certainly, there are no indications of coming disaster at present, but nevertheless that disaster may be on its road—*may be*—and we begin to argue with ourselves that the chances are it *is* so; and at last we settle down comfortably into the conviction that instead of being healthy, as we fancied we were yesterday, we are, in truth, just tumbling into the grave; instead of being rich, as till now we imagined, we positively are on the verge of poverty; instead of having cause to rejoice and be merry (and we recollect with remorse the happy and contented feeling which, up to this very morning, had sway within us), we have a great deal more reason to sit down and weep, with our utmost energy.

There is no doubt that if these dreary feelings be encouraged, they will increase to a dangerous extent. A man may so strive to make himself miserable, or rather may so little resist the inclination to be gloomy, that at length his melancholy may amount to partial insanity. The matter becomes formidable then, and unless something soon take place, and vigorously arouse him, there is a fair chance of the desponding individual ere long forming a subject for a coroner's inquest.

I cannot say, however, that I have much opinion of a man who will let his spirits be seriously lowered by such a matter as a dull day, or any like circumstance. He must be a poor mortal, and I wouldn't give much for his head or heart. A man, if there be anything in him, can know a cheering sunshine in the cloudiest day—a sunshine in his own lofty thoughts—his own bright imaginations. Just as a man may be alone, and yet in company; sitting solitarily in his study, he may in his mind's eye see men who have lived hundreds of years ago, and fancy in a moment may crowd into his chamber a brilliant multitude of the distant and the dead. I say he is only a poor creature, who is bound emphatically to the present, who can only behold what is immediately before his eyes, can only hear what is uttered directly in his hearing. A man should be able, by a mental effort, to transport himself, so to speak, to quite a different scene to that which, in reality, lies before him, and be affected by sights and sounds, which are only the offspring of imagination. Fancy can create a paradise, and to give the reins freely to imagination, and soar far away from the present scene to some dear spot in which our heart dwells, or to conjure up, as by a magician's power, the forms of those

whose society would be delightful to us; and, in thought, to enter into converse with them, speak to them, and hear them reply, as though, in very truth, instead of being far distant, or, alas! perhaps, worse, irrecoverably gone from us, they were with us in close and beautiful companionship—I say, to do this, is to know one of those deep pleasures of which there are so few in this mortal existence.

By these means, then, I could always baffle the gloomy influence of such a trifling circumstance as a bad day. But this is the lightest influence to contend against, and the easiest overcome. There is a melancholy of another order—of a calm, placid kind, having no resemblance to vulgar fretfulness or irritability, brought about by no nervousness or impatience, but induced by an involuntary pondering upon some of those higher matters connected with our existence, which, entering into the soul, cast from out it every atom of pride, and bring it into a state of intense humiliation. Under such a feeling I write at this moment. An hour ago there reached me intelligence of that event which, before this article shall have appeared, will have become known in every direction, and be regarded with a composure with which now it is impossible to survey it—I mean the death, under painful circumstances, of that distinguished individual who, for so long a period, exercised a main influence in the affairs of this nation. That event, coming thus startlingly and unexpectedly, teaches once more the old, old lesson of the vanity of every human hope and expectation. The man, who, but a few days ago, in the possession of full health and strength, was exhibiting to an admiring auditory the undiminished glory of his intellectual capacity, whose mind was, doubtless, filled with schemes and projects for future years, whereby new applause might be obtained and fresh laurels won—this man, by the simplest accident, by the sudden movement of a fractious animal, receives in one moment a fatal injury; lingers for a brief space, and then enters into his long last home.

And, moreover, how certain is the fact that great as will be the impression that will be everywhere created by the melancholy and deplorable occurrence, but a comparatively brief interval will elapse before almost entire forgetfulness will ensue, other men will fill the public eye, and upon them as living and in action will be fastened an attention which no dead men can claim. This, then, is life. I may struggle on through existence, and—take the brightest view—I may be successful in the world, I may win great honour, may achieve great renown; but sometime or other—sooner or later—disease comes upon me, or decay, or accident, and I fall, and I die. I am at once stripped of all the gains I had accumulated, and straightway enter upon another existence, where none of those honours and advantages sought with such eagerness, gained with such toil, will be carried to account. My death may throw a nation into mourning, and relatives and friends into the deepest affliction; nevertheless all things will go on as before; the sun on the morrow will rise again, though my eyes will not see its shining; the birds will sing as sweetly; nature will wear precisely the same aspect; the matters in which I have heretofore had concern will proceed uninterruptedly, simply passing into other hands; all will continue in its accustomed order, unaffected by the mighty change that will have passed over me. Event will succeed event, occurrences happen which would have excited within me the vastest emotion, rousing me to highest exultation, or depressing me to deepest despair; but what tidings

can penetrate the ear of him who sleeps "the sleep which knows not waking?" And a short space having intervened, I shall be comparatively lost sight of; the world at large will in great measure have forgotten me; other forms will have sprung up and engaged the eye, other voices will have occupied the ear. I was great in my day, and was admired and esteemed; but night came, and I was hid from the view. Much grieved after was I at first, and deeply was my loss felt; but then, as I fell into the grave, others started into new life and activity, and the void my death created is sooner or later filled up.

And looking yet further, the same result appears. When I die it is but reasonable to suppose that relatives and friends will sorrow for my death. Yet will that sorrow gradually diminish until at length it will have gone altogether. It is but natural that this should be the case, but who can think without emotion that, on the occasion, mayhap, of some future social gathering in winter, when the snow is falling and the wind is howling, many a jest will be bandied, many a joke enjoyed, many a laugh indulged in, by a merry and happy party, who are *not one whit the less merry or less happy* because one who in former times was never absent from them at these periods, *now* lies mouldering in the bleak churchyard. Deny it who may, there is much bitterness in this thought. We seem in our selfishness to wish that even inanimate things should be in some degree affected by our death; and the idea of all nature reviving when we are never to revive, and again of all the operations of life proceeding unchanged, though the mightiest change has fallen upon us; this idea is, and must be, repugnant. Moreover, the recollection that others will succeed to the public attention and admiration, which we cannot take with us to the grave, so that, as far as the world at large is concerned, a time will come when we shall not be missed; and again, that deeply as they may bewail us now, there will assuredly arrive an hour when even dear relatives and friends will survey the fact of our having mouldered into dust with the most perfect serenity.—Oh, there is something in these thoughts which even in the hearts of the most unselfish among us will awaken a bitter and melancholy emotion!

This then, I say, is life—not indeed, as I may view it in moments of gaiety, but as it appears before me when my mind, in grave mood, ponders the mystery of present and future existence. It is life, as I think of it, when I am roaming in the country on a bright summer day, when, with nothing human in sight, nothing to bring to mind the corruption and pollution with which this world of ours is so darkly identified, my heart is touched with the lesson of purity and peace which Nature, in her loveliness, seems emphatically to teach. Then, as I look up to the broad blue heavens, survey the waving trees, contemplate hill and valley, making up a rich and beauteous scene over which the eye may untiringly wander, I cannot but remember that while the locality, which I am now regarding, presents precisely the same aspect that it has borne mayhap for a number of years past, many are they who, in former time, beheld it, from whose gaze aught that is earthly has long ago faded. And when I come to think how some of these during life struggled and toiled, to what importance they attained, how identified they were with various proceedings—the influence they possessed,—I seem astonished that they should have passed away into another world, and yet that so trifling results should have followed on their death. Then comes down upon me, so to speak, that old lesson of which I have made mention, that this

is in truth but a wretched and insignificant existence, and I seem to long for the period when a brighter and a nobler shall open before me.

And there is another time when this same old lesson falls forcibly upon my mind, when at night I walk solitarily on the sea-shore, and hear the mighty waves rolling as they rolled a thousand years ago. They seem to speak of the mighty contrast between their unchangeableness and the change of which man is constantly the subject. Generations after generations have arisen and are gone, but the vast mass of waters presents the same aspect it did when the world was in its infancy—the same laws bind it—it is made subservient to the same uses—confers like benefits, and deals out, in its anger, the same dark destruction.

Now what is the sum and substance of these remarks? Do I advocate retirement from the world in loathing and disgust? Do I advise the casting away all sublunary concerns as unworthy of notice, and the giving exclusive attention to thoughts of things beyond the grave, and contemplation of a future existence? Not so; I have no admiration of the man who selfishly withdraws himself from society; who, preferring the luxurious ease of a perfectly quiet life—a life which involves no excitement, is burdened by no care, entails no mental or physical labour, demands no watchfulness of self—forgets that he is a member of a community, and that, as such, he is bound, as far as in him lies, to advance the common interests. A man may talk to me of the sinfulness in great cities and the purity in small villages, and he may enlarge on the peace and the calm that he enjoys in some retired spot far away from noise and tumult: but I say to that man that he is a selfish and unworthy creature; that his shunning the world is a purely selfish act, and that in pursuing such a course he is not travelling in the path dictated by true religion. No, no; my blessing is not with this man—it is with the man who knows and feels that there is much to be done, and who will give a hearty helping-hand to do it—who will not in some secure nook lift up his hands and deplore the wickedness that he hears is going on in large towns, and then express his thankfulness that he has no concern with busy life—who will not do this, but will throw himself manfully into the fight, and struggle hard for the cause of virtue and religion. I look scornfully on the man who, exclaiming, "Oh, what a wicked world!" straightway withdraws himself from it, and not caring to make a single effort to improve it, allows his days to dwindle out in some distant retreat. I admire the man who, indeed, truly estimating life, cognisant to the full how really insignificant at the best is this existence, nevertheless, as life has been given him, struggles and strives with his whole heart and soul—with his utmost energy and power, to work benefit and to do good; who remembers that talents were given not to be hidden and put away, but to be properly and profitably employed. And though even to this man there will be moments of melancholy and fits of gloom, certain is it, that such visitations will be but "few and far between;" weighed down he may be for a very brief period by the contemplation of the littleness and insignificance of his present existence, but quickly is he revived by the recollection that it is his own fault if even in this life he knows not many and great gratifications, and that upon his own head only will rest the blame if, this life ended, he enter not upon another of unfading enjoyment.

INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

THE STRANGE HOUSE AT DOLGELLY.

When draw the prosperous near me, I forget
The gods of Heaven; but where
Sorrow and suffering in my sight are set,
The gods I feel are there.

Schiller.

In introducing the "Incidents of the Road" to the readers of *Ainsworth's Magazine*, the writer would observe that he seeks no higher object than that of amusing, by the narration of circumstances which somewhat deviate from the common occurrences of every-day life. On the attention of lovers of the marvellous he has no claims, possessing neither the gifts of imagination to embellish, or the desire to coin strange things to add to the interest of his story. To those, however, who, in the calm unruffled repose of a stationary life, care but to know the romance of reality through other media than self-experience, these incidents may fairly be presumed to possess some interest; penned, as they are, by one whose home may be said to be everywhere—the quiet village, the crowded town, and mingling also with almost every grade of the great family of man.

In the words of the "Rambler," however, the reader is requested to accommodate his mind to the author's design; and as he will have no interest in refusing the amusement that is offered to him, not to interrupt his tranquillity by studied cavils, or destroy his satisfaction in that which may be already well, by inquiring how it might be better—to be content without pleasure, or pleased without perfection.

With this brief preface will I now proceed to my story; and shouldst thou, reader, ever in thy wanderings have visited that part of the habitable globe where my narrative opens, thou wilt readily allow that a more remarkable spot to harmonise with the singularity of such a meeting as my story will reveal, could not be chosen, were I framing a fiction, and selecting from the most remarkable places in great and glorious Britain.

Hast thou, reader, been a seeker of the grand and beautiful amidst the wild scenery of North Wales? Hast thou looked upon Cader Idris? Hast thou gazed upon that giant mountain from the deep and dark ravine through which winds the road from Machynlleth to Dolgelly, over whose path beetle huge rocks, as pile on pile in majestic ruggedness they mount in aspiring grandeur to the clouds? Hast thou here turned thy gaze towards the opening in the hills which admits the traveller into the rocky pass, and beheld low in the distance the far-spreading lake; and that, too, on a boisterous day, when its waters have been lashed into waves by the wild winds, which howling rushed round and past thee, with a sound like the cries of a troop of demons, or voices of spirits of the frowning rocks? Never have I made the journey without pausing at this romantic pass to gaze each time with increased interest upon it. On the left of the

road, partly hid by a low unmortared stone wall, in many parts shattered by the winds, the rocky height shelves sloping down some two hundred feet to its lowest depth, where, parted by a narrow gullet, whose stream takes its way amidst fragments of rock, it rises again more abrupt and precipitate on the other side, forming a part of the base of the all-majestic Cader.

It has been observed that mountain scenery the most impresses the mind with a sense of the greatness of the works of the Creator ; certain it is mountains, barren though they be, ever possess grandeur and sublimity. Here, where crested with granite, they raise their unadorned heads to the clouds, they possess a language which must address itself to every beholder, in their boldness of outline and their giant magnitude. Shouldst thou never have beheld the scene, reader, picture it to thy imagination, for here it was where I met with the subject of my narrative.

It was on a boisterous October evening that I had left Machynlleth (so well known for its mementos of Glendower), and night was drawing rapidly on, when I arrived at the wild ravine which I have attempted to describe, and at that part of the road, which cut out of, and winding round, the cloud-capped battlements of rock, leads again to the open country and the snug little town of Dolgelly. Walking beside my horse as he ascended the road, and occasionally checking his willingness to proceed, whilst I paused to drink deeply from the rich fount of Nature's grandeur presented to me, in nearing the summit of the ascent I beheld, a few paces in advance of me, the stationary figure of a man; his back was towards me, and he appeared to be absorbed in reflection, intently gazing on the majestic Cader Idris, the sides of which a greyish mist was wreathing, whilst the summit was hid in a dense cloud of vapour.

The sound of my approaching wheels, for a moment, seemed to arouse him from his reverie; turning suddenly round, he cast a hasty glance towards me and my vehicle, and immediately resumed his original position. He was seemingly advanced in years, and to judge by his dress and general appearance, a gentleman. Night was drawing rapidly on, and as old age ever commanded my reverence and respect, and knowing, also, that we were miles distant from any habitation, I did not hesitate, on coming up to the spot where he stood, to offer him a seat in my vehicle, should his way chance to be the same as mine. The reader may judge my surprise, when the mountain gazer declined my offer, and that somewhat rudely too; he could and would walk, and, not even thanking me, turned on his heel, and again appeared to become absorbed in the contemplation of the wild scenery before him. I made no reply, but, with an inward ejaculation against human nature in general, and this old gentleman in particular, I resumed my walk by the side of my steed, and, in a few moments, had gained the summit of the ascent. Whilst engaged gathering up the reins, and preparing to take my seat, a voice from behind hailed me, and, almost at the same moment, the old gentleman whom I had so recently passed, with more agility than I should have given him credit for possessing, placed his hand on the side of the gig and sprang in. He had been running, and, for a moment or two, was almost breathless; as soon, however, as he was able, he commenced apologising for his former rudeness, and to express how sensible he was of the kindness of my offer, and how gladly he would avail himself of it. His conduct was somewhat extraordinary, but there was a frankness in his manner which

pleased me, and taking my seat beside him, I drove on, not a little amused at the singularity of the proceeding.

I did not, however, hesitate to declare how much the conduct, for which he expressed his regret, had annoyed me at the time, and that I hardly knew how to reconcile the sincerity of an apology following so closely upon the heels of an offence. So earnest was the manner of the old gentleman on again expressing his regret that he had acted so boorishly, that I at once banished my half-feigned displeasure, and soon entered with him into an animated and amusing conversation.

There was an unmistakable polish about the stranger, a felicity in the choice of words, a happiness of expression, and a cheerfulness of manner most engaging. For an old man, however, he appeared to be somewhat excitable. As we proceeded he seemed to make himself quite at home with me, and evinced not the slightest hesitation in putting questions in the most direct manner, as to the pleasure or business which had called me into that part of the country. Such impertinences ill-accorded with his otherwise gentlemanly bearing; and yet in return for the little information which I gave him on the subject of his inquiries, I must do my companion the justice to say that he was very prodigal in return. Indeed, when I had informed him I was only on a brief visit to Dolgelly, and purposed quitting the place on the following day, he immediately proceeded to inform me that he was almost a stranger to the place, that his residence was within a mile of Dolgelly, and that he had chosen the locality for a few months' sojourn on account of its quietness and salubrity. When he spoke of the scenery in the neighbourhood, he became positively eloquent, and appeared to be doubly delighted to have found in me a congenial spirit, who did not hesitate to declare with what fervour he, too, had worshipped at the shrine of all-glorious Nature.

There was something so truly original, so much pleasing enthusiasm and buoyancy of spirit in my companion, that I could not resist the opportunity afforded me of seeing more of him; the reader will, therefore, scarcely wonder that we parted with an acceptance on my part of the invitation which he gave me to sup with him, and as I put him down at the gate, which led through an avenue of trees to his residence, I assured him he might rely upon my attendance.

Readily will it be imagined that I had not long been an inmate of that spacious and comfortable hostelrie, yclept "The Golden Lion," at Dolgelly, ere I instituted inquiries relative to the occupants of the mansion which my late companion had pointed out to me as his home. The information which I received on the subject was calculated not a little to increase my curiosity and desire to learn more of that eccentric individual. It appeared that the family consisted, besides the old gentleman, of an elderly and a young lady, who, by their hermit-like habits, had much puzzled the good people of Dolgelly. They never entered the town, had been seen by very few, and the servants had proved, since the arrival of the family in the neighbourhood, invulnerable to all attempts made by the curious to learn from whence they came, with other particulars which they were desirous of ascertaining.

One person alone, Doctor ——, was on visiting terms with the family, and that chiefly in his professional capacity; and he, even to his most intimate friends, was as close on the subject as the grave. And so it was

known to the natives as the strange house, and its occupants as the strange people.

The worthy hostess of the Lion was not a little surprised when, in return for her liberal communication of all she knew, and what she thought, I informed her that I was about to visit the old gentleman; and having seen my steed comfortably housed for the night, and sent off my despatches, I lost no time in proceeding to the place of invitation.

It was a lovely night, the cloudless star-gemmed heavens seemed to touch the majestic mountain heights around, whilst, on the very crest of the towering Cader, one bright planet was glittering in glorious effulgence, seeming like some Queen of Light enthroned, and giving audience in that vasty court whose boundaries were heaven and earth—to the innumerable myriads of attendant luminaries beaming around. How beautiful, indeed, is unclouded starlight amidst the mountains!

My coming was evidently expected by the liveried functionary who answered my summons at the door of the mansion: he silently proceeded to usher me into a room, which I had scarcely entered ere I was joined by my host. The apartment was spacious, richly furnished, and ornamented with numerous choice paintings, which the old gentleman seemed not a little proud of, whilst introducing each separately to my notice.

As in his description of the grand and beautiful in nature, he was scarcely less an enthusiast in his admiration of the works of art, the productions of the master-spirits of the age, which he had here gathered together, and which were chiefly modern productions. As I then beheld him, I think I see him now, standing before a large painting which he most highly prized, and changing the position of the candle which he held, until he had obtained the proper light in which I was to inspect it. The subject of the picture was a mountain lake—time, sunset—the waters of the lake, and the angular masses of rock which bounded it, were cast in deep shadow, whilst the summit of the mountain, with its heathery clothing, catching the last rays of the sinking sun, presented itself in contrast as beautiful as it was striking. Such dark green water, such blackish-grey rock, and such sunshine, were never surpassed, perhaps but rarely equalled, on canvas. An eagle, on the wing, was seen crossing the lake, as though it were about to ascend to some eyrie in the rocks; the whole scene presenting a picture of wild beauty and grandeur, such as would at once impress the beholder that nature itself, and nature only, had been followed by the painter-poet's hand. Ay, in verity, none but a poet, if not in language, in the depths of his soul, was he whose master-hand had produced that exquisite work of art. The subject chosen revealed how much had he of the poetry of the beautiful within him, and its surpassing excellence that it had been with him a labour of love. That he had withal a poet's fondness, sought and communed with nature, had midst the hills many a time and oft watched the sinking sun, and gathered from fleeting ray and spreading shadow subjects for that pencil which should gain him immortality. It was, indeed, a surpassing production of true genius. The artist appeared to have had complete dominion over the powerful materials of light and darkness, and had so varied and disposed them under the influence of a poetical mind, as to produce effects, whose beauty was only equalled by their close fidelity to nature. I dwell upon this subject as affording a revelation of the enthusiasm of my entertainer; and in the description which I have given

of the painting, to the best of my memory, have repeated his language. Yes, I think I now behold him whilst expatiating on this prized gem of his collection; his eyes seemed to beam with additional lustre; and as the glowing terms with which he expressed his admiration, and the beauty of the object before us, drew from me scarcely less warm expressions of delight, he appeared to work himself into a state of excitement, almost rapturous.

Our inspection of the paintings over, we drew up to the fire, and I now observed an embroidery frame, a pianoforte, and several ornaments on the massive marble chimney-piece, indicative of there being members of the gentler sex occupants of the house. Strange, although my entertainer must have observed my gaze resting upon these evidences of such proximity, he never alluded to them; but led the conversation, in which I soon found myself discussing the popular subjects of the day, politics and phrenology, music and mesmerism, and I know not what besides. My host's conversational powers were considerable, yet I could not help observing that he endeavoured to prevent the conversation resting on one subject long; and by the time that we sat down together to supper, a listener would have had reason to suppose that we had pretty nearly exhausted the whole range of ordinary conversible matter. The supper provided for us was first-rate—the cookery worthy of a first-class professor, the appointments of the table superb, and the liveried functionaries who attended glided around us noiselessly as spirits.

My entertainer certainly spared no effort to make me enjoy his society and my supper, and yet withal I did not feel exactly at my ease. There was an indescribable something about him that kept my curiosity on the alert, and yet baffled it. I could not divest myself of the impression that he was acting a part, and that there was a something of the forced in his seeming gaiety and joyousness. Besides, the absence of the rest of the family was calculated to induce me to believe that my visit had been to them not altogether acceptable, the reflection of which to some extent prevented me from entering fully and freely into the humour of my host, the which, by the way, rapidly increased as he paid close devoir to a delicious punch of his own concoction, the which won from me, with its peculiar excellence, most honest and unqualified praise.

The time wore on, and with the flying hours at length vanished the unpleasant cogitations which, on account of the reasons I have mentioned, since my entering the mansion had been mine. Seeing that there was no likelihood of an addition being made to our party, and that the ladies had in all probability retired for the night, I no longer hesitated to enter fully and freely into the jocular spirit which seemed to inspire my entertainer. The old gentleman was possessed of a tolerable stock of anecdote, most of which, to me, was new; his acquaintance, too, with the German and French, as well as our own drama, was surprising, displaying a memory wonderfully retentive in the various readings which he gave me. But his perception of the ludicrous was, perhaps, the most striking feature in his character; he was highly imaginative, and the odd and whimsical imaginings and conceits which he gave utterance to, were not unworthy of being transmitted to posterity by the pencil of immortal "George." In return, I gave him the best things I was acquainted with, and our united cachinations at times were certainly not far removed from the boisterous. My companion at times would quit his seat, and, pacing the apartment,

repeat the point of an anecdote which had tickled his fancy, and called forth his laughter, and whilst repeating the words, burst out afresh more loudly than ever. At times, too, it appeared as though he were endeavouring to repress the mirth kindled within him by changing the theme to more sober matter, and, as I imagined, with this view proceeded to recite some lines which he told me were a translation of his own from Schiller. His elocution was most excellent, and I was not a little vexed when, in the midst of the piece, he suddenly came to a pause, a peculiar expression, which I had not observed before, spread over his features, and, to my great astonishment, when he again broke silence, it was with an exclamation of mingled surprise and terror, whilst with starting eyes he looked at me as though I had become suddenly an object of aversion to him. By a strong effort, however, he seemed to master this sudden emotion, and, resuming his seat, the position of which I observed he so altered as no longer to confront me, declared that he had forgotten the remainder of the passage, and challenged me to another bumper from the capacious bowl. Deeply now did he quaff the nectar; again came a change over his humour, and again did his boisterous laugh break on the stillness of the night.

It was during one of these loud bursts of merriment, that I was turning on my chair to the table to replenish my glass, when my attention was suddenly arrested by perceiving, in a distant part of the spacious room, where the candles threw but a glimmering haze, the figure of a female. Scarce had my glance rested upon her, ere she disappeared in the gloom; a slight noise, as of a door gently closing, leading me to believe that she had been on the watch, or probably intending to speak to us, and changing her intention, had suddenly retired.

From the stationary position in which I had seen her, the first supposition appeared to be nearest the truth, and as the other extremity of the large room in which we sat was almost in total darkness, I conceived it to be not unlikely that others might be there concealed observing us. The old gentleman had not noticed my look of surprise, or heard the half-smothered exclamation which, on discovering the figure, I had involuntarily made. From the moment, however, that I beheld the form that had so suddenly vanished, a change came over the spirit of my merriment, and with tenfold force my former uneasiness returned. My host's late extraordinary display had somewhat tended to lessen the enjoyment which I had previously derived from his society; but this last most singular proceeding on the part of some other, to me, mysterious member of the establishment, completed the effect. I resolved to quit the place, and, rising from my seat, intimated my intention of returning to my inn.

My entertainer seemed somewhat astonished at the suddenness of my resolve, and appeared determined, if possible, to induce me to prolong my stay. I had, during the earlier part of my visit, in the course of our conversation on the subject, expressed myself as a fond lover of music; and my host now backed his pressing entreaty for me to remain, by volunteering something on the pianoforte, if I would consent to stay another hour. Fond as I am of the concord of sweet sounds, I must confess to feeling somewhat annoyed at finding my intention of retiring thwarted, without being positively rude, by the remembrance on the part of the old gentleman, of an expression made at an early part of the night, and at finding it made subservient to keep me longer. To do my host justice, he played

as few amateurs play; he sang also, and though age had much impaired his voice, sweet was it in its feebleness, whilst his execution revealed how thoroughly grounded he had been in the science of song.

Behind the instrument, forming as it were a panel in the wall, was fixed an immense mirror, and as the old gentleman played without notes, and as there was nothing before him to intercept the reflection, I had presented to me, as I stood at his side, his countenance therein fully shown. I know not why, but my gaze was irresistibly attracted to a contemplation of his features thus presented in the bright mirror before me. A few grey hairs were scattered over his brow, lofty and broad; his features marked with the lines of age, but yet handsome; whilst their general expression of high intelligence, with a cast of sadness, confirmed my previously-formed opinion, that the hilarity which I had witnessed had in some measure been forced, and his joyousness been anything but from the heart.

After singing two or three very sweet compositions of a plaintive character, he suddenly ceased, nor did he make an observation for full five minutes afterwards, but continued playing a beautifully wild and touching melody, which, from his silence, I judged to affect him deeply. Indeed, he appeared so much absorbed in the performance as to have forgotten me altogether. I remember well that it was just as I was about to address him, when he suddenly came to a pause, resting his fingers on the keys of the instrument, and, raising his eyes, in the huge bright mirror before us his gaze met mine. Great heaven! how strange! What fearful fascination! I could not take my eyes away; whilst my heart felt as though it had been suddenly frozen to ice. The glare of a madman was upon me! It was deep night, and we were alone! The muscles of his mouth, as his eye met mine, contracted in a fearful manner; his face became blanched, his lips livid. Uttering a cry, which was something between a howl and a scream, on the instant he sprang to his feet, throwing himself upon me, whilst I felt his hand grasping at my throat. So sudden, impetuous, and unexpected was the attack, that I stumbled backwards and fell. Rescuing me from his attempted grasp, my fall enabled him to snatch one of the irons from the fireplace, which, quick as light, he raised to strike me. Springing to my feet, I succeeding in partly escaping the intended blow, by catching his descending arm, and, seizing him round the body, I hurled him to the ground, and held him firmly down. For a minute, nay, not so much, and yet it seemed an hour, I held that poor maniac there; and the expression of his eyes, as they then glared upon me, will never pass from my memory.

Whilst we were struggling on the ground, with a loud scream a young girl rushed into the room, and throwing herself down on her knees by the old gentleman, she caught hold of one of his hands, and, in the midst of violent emotion, sobbed out,

"My dear, dear father!"

Two of the servants, strong, powerful fellows they were, who, unseen and unheard by me, had rushed into the room, soon released me from the old man, by bearing him to a sofa, despite his violent exertions to break away.

Standing by the sofa, and bending over the lunatic, I now beheld an elderly lady, who, like her companion, was attired in deep mourning. She appeared to give instructions to the servants, addressing them in a

suppressed tone of voice; and they, apparently acting under her directions, coolly bore the old man, in spite of his efforts, past me, whilst a female domestic, who stood with a light, evidently prepared for the case, led the way out of the room. The elderly lady and her young companion were about to follow them, when the former, turning to me, hurriedly expressed her regret for what had occurred, begging me to be seated, and to excuse their absence, which for a short time was indispensable. I silently bowed; they left the room, and, a few moments after, I heard the sound of voices, as though in high altercation; then the noise of a closing door, and all became as still as death.

I was too much excited to sit calmly down, but paced the apartment, with all kinds of strange conjectures crowding in upon me. It was evident that I had been completely deceived in the character of my host—that I had been for hours unconsciously sitting in the company of a madman. There was a mystery, also, in the whole affair, which bewildered me; and it may easily be conceived that I was impatient for the return of the old lady, when I might expect to have some little light thrown on the matter.

I had not to wait long. With her younger companion, she again entered the room, and after, with much apparent concern and kindness of manner, inquiring if I had received any hurt, proceeded to offer me a room for the remainder of the night, if I would accept it, in preference to returning to the town. I declined the offer, and observed that I was sorry to find myself the unwitting cause of circumstances which, as well as for the old gentleman, on their account I so much regretted.

"You are very considerate, very kind, sir," said the youngest of the ladies, addressing me; "but we feel that we have much to apologise to you for. My father had apprised us of your meeting, of your coming, and we have to regret that we did not interpose, or prepare you for that dreadful visitation of mind which, in consequence of severe domestic afflictions, has——"

Emotion prevented her finishing the sentence. The melancholy melody of her voice, the expression of her dark hazel eyes, which, despite her efforts to suppress tears, were rapidly suffusing, caused me to experience a peculiar sensation about the organs of vision, and I am not sure that I did not a little play the woman myself.

"I assure you, sir," said the old lady, interposing to the last speaker's relief, "that he has never been so violent as you have seen him to-night. Indeed, it having been so long since he had a paroxysm at all, we more readily consented to allow him to make his own arrangements to sup with you alone; it was an error in judgment which we must be careful not to repeat; in extenuation, however, I must observe, that we had no conception of the evil with which Mr. —— is so unhappily afflicted being so deeply rooted and so serious as this night has revealed it to be."

She paused, but before I could offer a remark, again resumed.

"If I understood Mr. —— aright, you are making but a short stay in the neighbourhood?"

"To-morrow evening I purpose quitting Dolgelly," I replied; "allow me to leave my card. I had not one to present to Mr. —— on our first meeting, since which, I have forgotten it;" and, drawing one forth, I handed it to the old lady, and added, that I was staying at the Lion Hotel.

"You will very much oblige us," she rejoined, whilst hastily glancing at my name, "by not caring to give the result of your visit here to any

of the curious in the town, who, having heard of your visit, may interrogate you thereon. By thus obliging us, you will truly show that sympathy which I am sure you feel for Mr. ——, and for us."

The reader will readily conceive that I assured the old lady she might rely upon her wishes being attended to, and, feeling that my presence longer could not be otherwise than painful to them, I rose from my seat to depart.

Ere bidding me good night the old lady gave me a pressing invitation to dine with them on the morrow, when she observed Mr. —— would, in all probability, be so far recovered as to join the party; when he would have an opportunity of apologising to me for that which had passed, without which the recollection of the event would be to him a continued source of pain. Pleading other pressing engagements I begged to decline, expressing at the same time a hope that the old gentleman would soon recover, and that on my next visit to Dolgelly I should hear of his health being thoroughly established. With an understanding that I was to pay them a visit when I next came to that part of the country, and a good-bye and cordial shake of the hand with both ladies, I took my leave. Ushered by a servant I soon found myself at the entrance gate, and on the road to Dolgelly, with the events of the last five hours flitting across my brain like the unconnected fragments of a strange and half-forgotten dream.

It was somewhere about two o'clock in the morning when I aroused that useful functionary, the Boots, from a sound sleep in one of the elevated domiciles of the Golden Lion. I retired to rest in anything but a composed state of mind; the events of the night had been of so exciting a nature, that in my fitful slumbers I again joined in boisterous mirth with the old gentleman, again beheld in the huge mirror his eyes glaring upon me, and, struggling with him again, beheld the fearful blow descending.

In the summer following I once more visited Dolgelly, and on inquiring, I learned that the mansion was untenanted, and the mysterious family, who formerly occupied it, had left, no one knew whither. I never saw or heard of them more.

On reviewing the circumstances which I have related, the reader will probably conclude with me, that it presents one of the many instances which, in this ever-changing scene, try and develop the most sterling and beautiful qualities which characterise woman. He will with me perceive that the two individuals of the gentler sex, of whom these pages tell, had, the one, sacrificed friends and comforts, and that peace and tranquillity which should ever smooth the declining years of life; and the other, the world, kindred young hearts like her own, society which she was so highly calculated to adorn, to cheer the hours of a decaying and darkened mind, to watch and tend that which in its state of wreck had become then ever more endeared, and by self-sacrifice and watchfulness to avoid the dread alternative of immolating in the gloomy walls of an asylum one so well beloved. Honour to woman! such instances so exalting to humanity are not rare. Honour to woman for her self-denial, her patient suffering, and her undying affection! Woman, who in harmony with that glorious creation which gave the sun to gladden the earth, despite of the clouds which lower over the paths of life, with her smile irradiates the scene, and until time shall be no more, will be, as she has ever been, the brightest gem of this beautiful world.

A VISIT TO THE LAKES.

Were you ever at the Lakes, gentle reader? If not, pray go there as soon as you can. Go when (as Mrs. Hemans sings)—

> Spring
> Has passed by the hills of the stormy north,
> And the larch has hung all her tassels forth;

or in June, when the woods and hedges are in all their leafy pomp; or in autumn, when the country has put on its Joseph's coat of many colours, and the Lakes are a deep cold blue, and the fern on the banks bright red, and the moss is sere and yellow, and the birch and beech golden, and the oak has a copperish tint, and the wild cherry (a wonderfully beautiful tree, that!) is rich crimson, and even the black spotted leaves of the sycamore turn a little brown, and the green holly grows yet more green and glossy, as if in mockery of its brethren. Go, then, gentle reader, if you can; and should you afterwards meet Mrs. Trollope, you may tell her that you have seen a "fall" as brilliant in colouring as she ever could have beheld in the American forests.

But before going to the Lakes, listen to me while I open the lips of wisdom. If you possess in your wardrobe any strange outlandish bonnet, shaped like a coal-skuttle, or the lid of a stewpan or a soup-tureen; any gown of startling pattern or material, or shortness, or scantiness, or fulness, or any other "ness;" any cloak that was thought admirable twenty years ago; any scarlet boots, or gloves of tender green; take them with you, they will do charmingly for the Lakes. And you, too, gentle gentleman reader, should *you* possess any wide-awake, outraging the ideas of propriety of all your middle-aged female aunts and cousins, any *very* knowing shooting-jacket, any trousers of any of those charming patterns that make your legs like animated gridirons; take, oh, take them with you! they will just do for the Lakes. For the singularity of your dress shows the singularity of your mind, and because greatness is singular, singularity is supposed to be great; dress then like an Ojibbeway Indian trying to be fashionable, and some people will consider you a great genius; it is only commonplace people who care how they are clothed; you, gentle reader, are as indifferent about it as "the lilies of the field," and I dare say, "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of you," indeed I am quite sure of it. And pray suffer from no *mauvaise honte* about your costume; do not walk along with the uncomfortable idea that every one is looking at you. Put on what you will, the chances are twenty to one that you meet every day half-a-dozen people as singularly attired. Every one tries to show the outward signs of a great genius here; every one cries out, "No one cares for dress here;" and every soul you meet, or, perhaps, I ought to say every *body*, is a witness to it. *I* never should feel the least surprise to see people walking about like the American Indians, with a blanket and a wooden skewer as their sole costume, and were it not for the coldness of the climate and the one policeman I discovered at Ambleside, I dare say before this they would have returned to the primitive fig-leaf; perhaps, though, fig-trees may be scarce so far north, or that costume, though biblical, might have been considered by dear departed Mr. Wordsworth "contra bonos mores." But in what-

ever costume it pleases you, your maid, or your valet, that you should appear in, go! and whether you wear a fig-leaf or not, or whether you go in spring or autumn, you will, I know, be charmed with all you see, if only the genius loci (which vulgar-minded people might call the rain) suffers you to see anything.

Do you remember, gentle reader, a certain story of Sir Walter Scott and his better half (how excellent must she have been!) watching the gambols of the lambs?—

"How charming," cried the bard, "to watch their frolics! how beautiful they look now——! but, my dear, you do not watch them, you are not thinking of them."

"Indeed, my dear, I am," answered the worthy lady; "I was thinking just at that moment how good they would be—*cold, with mint-sauce.*"

Great souls are seldom understood by those nearest them; that sweet saint, that sat by Walter's side, evidently did not understand him; nor did my friend, whom I had carried with me on my travels, me, when, as Windermere burst on our sight, I cried, with an oratorical sweep of the arm that hit him on the nose—

"How beautiful—how deep—how blue!"

"Humph!" he grunted out, rubbing his injured nose; "humph, lakes generally are deepish. I hope to Heaven this is a *very* deep one, as then we shall get char for dinner, my boy; think of that!"

Is it possible, O Windermere! that pilgrims visit thee for the sake of thy fish?

This took place on the *Last Minstrel* (a coach, gentle reader, not an aged individual with a harp upon his back), as we drove from the Windermere station to Bowness. Close to the station we passed Ellaray, the house of Professor Wilson; it was then for sale, abandoned by its owner, principally, the gossips of the country said, because the good people who came by the cheap-trip trains, would assert the boasted freedom of true-born Britons, by breaking in and walking all over the grounds—a phase of English liberty better contemplated in theory than witnessed in practice.

Bowness, the first town in the lake district, I do not much admire; it is a gay place, much given to dinners, balls, and immense picnics; considers itself fashionable and quite in the world, and of the world, and looks down upon its next neighbour, Ambleside, with supreme contempt. Ambleside is literary, and gives tea-parties and reading-parties, instead of balls and routs; and, of course, thinks Bowness a very light frivolous sort of place, speaks of it and its inhabitants with a mild pity that singularly aggravates them. Of course the two places hate each other with the cordial hatred that often springs up amongst near neighbours in the country (hear it not, ye bucolical poets!), but where people have no occupation (and after all, watching the weather can scarcely be called an occupation), it is not astonishing they should sometimes hate their neighbour; it is, at all events, something to do. Opposite Bowness lies a cluster of islands, the principal being Curwen's Island; from it the views, both up and down the lake, are very beautiful, but it has little beauty in itself, being spotted all over with trees, by which means all effect is spoiled. On it stands a singularly ugly Italian villa, which assorts as well with the scenery round it, as a wart on a beauty's face with the other features. This is not original, gentle reader, it was the term used by Lord ——, when asked

by the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, whether he advised her to destroy the old palace of Woodstock. From Bowness, the *Lady of the Lake* or the *Lord of the Isles* (steamers, good reader!) will convey you to the head of the lake. I declined both, however, and mounting again the *Last Minstrel*, proceeded to Lowood. Close to this place is the house where Mrs. Hemans lived; it bears the romantic name of Dove's Nest—a name, however, not bestowed by the gentle poetess, as I once imagined. It is a quiet, cottage-looking place, commanding a most lovely view, not grand or awful, but a view of quiet, gentle, comfortable beauty; wood and lake, and enough mountain for the picturesque, and not too much for comfort; a lovely view it was, as the sun shone upon the glassy lake, and the blue mountains melted softly away in the distance. No wonder a poetess chose here her home; no wonder she wrote so voluminously. I almost think a steam-engine put down here might have been inspired. We sat down for some time in her favourite bower, a whitewashed old building, talking with the good dame of the house, who had been there when Mrs. Hemans had it. She chatted away readily about her, told us she loved much new milk and cold meat, and *would* walk about the country with only a veil on her head and no bonnet. A mode of proceeding that shocked our informant much. "It wasn't 'spectable," she said, "to see a lady walking about in that fashion, and so I told her; I ain't afraid of speaking up, I ain't; and I've given her a bit of my mind about it scores, ay, and scores again of times. But she was a nice lady, though she wouldn't wear a bonnet." And then, by an insensible digression, the good woman slipped into politics; and here certainly she was not at all afraid of speaking up. She gave us her opinions freely about "the people," and "the people's rights," and about the bishops, whom she described as "a set of auld bodies fit for nought in this world nor the next neither, I'm thinking. What business have they with all the money, I wonder? Why don't they give it to the young clergymen, nice young men they be. I've known many of them myself, and some of them as good-looking young fellows as ever I clapped eyes on." At the same time she had a great horror of "Methodies," whom she considered worse than the bishops.

Leaving our chatty political guide at last, we went on to the head of the lake. Here the two great feeders of the lake, the Rothay and Brathay, like rival beauties, each try to entice you. Follow first the Brathay—the Brathay, now sleeping in grassy meadows, now spreading out its waters into a lake-like pool, and then hurrying on past the chapel into the lake. Follow its course for a mile or so, and then turn off: here is Loughrigg Tarn, like a pocket looking-glass; further on, Elterwater, like a swamp—indeed some people require to be told it is a lake. Pass on under Langdale Pikes, through a country most wild and pastoral, and here is Blea Tarn; a wood of Scotch firs on one bank, behind the lofty limpy pikes, and all around as grand, as desolate, as awful as painter or poet could wish. Now on, past Langdale Water, a lake, that is all I can find to say of it, and so to Coniston Water. This is a charming lake; a comfortable, quiet, good-tempered looking lake. The hills slope away gradually, and the wood nestles down to the very water's edge; no frowning crags or wrinkled rocks look down upon you; no mountains of any size lift their head, except the Old Man, and a very

fine old man he is, though, when last I saw him, as blue with the evening mist as any young lady of forty or thereabouts need wish to be. Everything round you is quiet, and countryfied, except indeed a boathouse of Mr. Marshall's. This is a very imposing building on the water's edge, massive with turrets, and a low-browed, arched entrance—a perfect plaster specimen of the old gatehouse—though where it is to lead to, unless to some palace under the hill that Mr. Marshall has in imitation of the king of the faries, I can't tell. However, despite the gatehouse, 'tis a charming lake, and when the sun sets, and the water is a sheet of glass (Bohemian glass, crimson and gold), I don't know one that can surpass it, not even Windermere, which in its character it most resembles. And now back by Easthwaite Water to the junction of Rothay and Brathay; but first look at Wray Castle, an edifice of the nineteenth century—Gothic, very imposing to those who are imposed on by a certain arrangement of stone and mortar—very imposing indeed, I may say, and only to be rivalled, I will not say equalled, by Goodrich Castle on the Wye, where, as you cross the drawbridge, you perceive that all the servants' offices look into the moat;—an ingenious device for drowning one's domestics in case of siege. And now up the Rothay to Ambleside, a pretty quaint town, preserving a great deal of the air of an out-of-the-way country town, despite the great influx of visitors in summer; and a gas lamp having been substituted for the cross on the steps in the market-place. Here lives Miss Martineau—that apostle of Mesmerism and the Rights of Women, who draws forth such warm praise from my Lord John Russell's lips, has set up her tent here. Within a mile or two of this place is Rydal Mount, Mr. Wordsworth's. (This of course refers to a period anterior to the great poet's death.) And here, gentle reader, stop and meditate for a moment on the surpassing attractions of this land. How varied must be its beauties, how great its charms, that could win Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Miss Martineau, Professor Wilson, Dr. Arnold, Mrs. Hemans, and Mrs. Trollope (for Mrs. Trollope we claim for the lakes; Mrs. Trollope lived within sight of the mountains of Ullerwater, Mrs. Trollope surely was a laker.) How great, I say, must be its attractions to win all these to its bosom; for though many of them, one could easily understand, loving the country and rejoicing in its beauty as if it were their mistress, yet some of them surely the world is not apt to consider pastorally or bucolically given. No one ever took Miss Martineau for a shepherdess, certainly not for a Dresden china shepherdess. She does not give one at all the idea of a lady likely to carry a crook in her hand tied with a knot of blue ribands, while a pet lamb with a ditto round its neck followed. Nor can one conceive that the great rival of Malthus, the great antagonist of philoprogenitiveness (God forgive us the use of that long word!), should come without some very great attraction into a district where the children seem to be produced like the chickens in the new incubation process, a hundred at a time—a process which the march of intellect has discovered to do away with that exceedingly old fashioned, and entirely used-up animal, the domestic hen. Miss Martineau is a lady whose activity of mind and body we much admire, though even yet we have scarce got over our wonder at it. By turns politician, theologian, doctor, romancer, historian, traveller, philosopher, and prophet; the mixture of characters is quite bewildering. Then as for activity of body, she travels

over all the country with a knapsack on her back, climbing mountains, exploring waterfalls and glens, and almost every year she starts off to some new country—Egypt, America, Turkey. For my own part, *I* never should be astonished to hear that she had started on a journey to the moon, and should in such a case venture to recommend to her the same stages that were proposed to the first Duchess of Newcastle. Her grace had been inquiring tenderly of a learned doctor where she was to lie of nights if she took a journey to the moon? to which the able reply was, "that her grace had built so many castles in the air, that she could well afford to lie in a different one every night, however long the journey might be." It is an old story, gentle reader, of Charles II.'s time; you may have heard it a hundred times before, but I think the advice applies to Miss Martineau as well as to her grace.

Then there is Mrs. Trollope, who ever pictured Mrs. Trollope giving herself up to country pursuits, counting her chickens before they were hatched, for instance? Not I for one.

But let us return to Ambleside. Miss Martineau's house, commanding most lovely views of Loughrigg and the head of the lake of Windermere, is next door to the Independent Meeting House, a building of most singularly unadorned simplicity. It is here that Miss Martineau resides in winter,—it is here she studies and writes; in summer she collects the materials, in this respect resembling that thrifty animal the ant. About a mile hence, along a wooded beautiful road, with hills all round, and on one side Lady Fleming's park, you come to Rydal Mount. Here, just at the foot of the hill leading to his house, we had the good luck to meet the late great poet,—a tall, thin old man stooping slightly over his staff, with long silvery hair hanging on his shoulders, and a singularly benevolent expression of countenance; he was very like his portraits (and in the lake districts portraits of him are as common as those of her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, or Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington, in London), but he was rapidly descending the hill of life, and his stooping figure and shrill reedy voice showed it. Yet he was still full of life, as the following anecdote will show. A lady, a short time previously, was introducing some friends to him; after each person's name she added, "A great admirer of yours, Mr. Wordsworth,"—"a profound admirer of yours, Mr. Wordsworth,"—"a worshipper, I may say, of yours, Mr. Wordsworth:" the first few times Mr. Wordsworth simply bowed, but when the good lady had got to her fifth friend, and still continued her running commentary, he could stand it no longer.

"*Of course*, ma'am!" he cried, waving his hand impatiently,—"*of course*, ma'am! *every one* is a profound admirer of mine."

Poets say it is a monstrous hard thing to climb the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar; I think some of them might also add that, when they do get there, they find it in some respects a very uncomfortable lodging. Every tourist who used to pass through Rydal had three wishes: the first, to be introduced to Mr. Wordsworth; the second, to see him; the third, to enter his library and carry off some article from it as a relic. The first was very difficult to obtain; the second depended principally on chance; but the third, or, at all events, the first part of it (as the house didn't walk about the country like its master), they could generally always gratify if they would. The number of people, consequently, who begged

to be allowed to look into the library of Rydal Mount was considerable, and the quantity of stray articles they carried off scarcely less so. It is a sad thing to say, but true nevertheless, that Mr. Wordsworth, if he didn't commit any sins himself, was the cause of a great many being committed by others. I myself never was exposed to the temptation of having my fingers within an inch or two of Mr. Wordsworth's paper-knife, or pen-wiper, or seals, or may be a letter half written; and, therefore, not having stolen anything myself, I am free to confess (excuse, pray, this House of Commons' idiom) that I think it exceedingly wrong in my neighbours doing so; not to mention that it must have been rather a distracting mark of admiration to the poet. Then, too, on Sundays the tourists went to church, not to pray to God (as you might do, gentle reader, or I), but to get "a good look at Mr. Wordsworth," or, as I have heard some more elegantly express it, "a squint at the old boy." I am very sure, if the clerk had been asked during the season what the church was built for, he would have answered, "to allow strangers to see Mr. Wordsworth;" indeed, from his asking you so carefully when you entered, if you would not like to sit where you could see Mr. Wordsworth, it was evident, without asking, that such was his idea. But now, alas! these pleasant days are over, and Rydal has lost its chief attraction, so we shall quit it, and pass along the side of the quiet, woody lake—of all the lakes the most calm and retired-looking,—the shores are wooded, and the islands are wooded; no boat floats on its surface; no noise is heard, save (except, indeed, your evil star sends you a jingling car full of talking tourists) the noise of the summer wind in the tree tops, or a wild duck flying clamorously out of the reeds that fringe the lake, or a heron spreading his vast wings and flying lazily to his home in one of the islands. There are here no impudent stuck-up houses staring you in the face,—no boards pointing to hotels and boarding-houses,—no eloquent papers (eloquent, indeed! for every one understands them just as well whether stuck wrong-side uppermost or the right way) telling of "furnished lodgings to let." Make the most of the absence of all these, for at Grasmere their name is legion. Grasmere is beautiful still; a few years ago it must have been most beautiful; a few years hence the beauty will almost have left it, for its shores will be a perfect town,—almost, I say, for no one can build on the tops of the mountains. Every year fresh houses spring up here, —every year you miss some favourite spot,—every year fresh boards, announcing "This eligible freehold land to be sold for building purposes," are stuck up.

O, English people! English people! why will you say you are fond of the beauties of Nature, and then deface her by building up frightful staring houses, with stables and double coachhouse, and "a productive walled kitchen-garden," stuck against the side of a hill, so that no one may suspect you of not having it? Why will you build what house-agents call "spacious and desirable mansions," which you have no sooner furnished than you sell or become bankrupt? If you cannot live without your desirable mansions, go to town, to Westbourne Terrace, Sussex Square, Hyde Park Gardens, or Portland-place, there are spacious desirable mansions in abundance, all after your own heart,—edifices of wonderful simplicity, plain walls with rows of holes in them, square or oblong, as the case may be; there you may have gas, and fresh fish,

and pale ale—all more useful than lakes, or mountains, or trees,—there live, I pray you; and if you sigh for the beauties of nature, and must have a little green to look at, stick pots of geraniums in your drawing-room window. O, English people! respectable, money-making, money-loving English people! stay in these your fit haunts. If rust and moths corrupt, and thieves break in and steal in town, do they not do the same in the country? And there you have no one to prevent the thieves breaking in and stealing, while here, in every street, in every square, by the glare of the gas and the pale light of day, you have blue-coated individuals pacing along, whom you respectable people call policemen; there, too, have you not in every street temples—plaster, or brick, or stone—in which on Sundays you can read your prayer-books or fall asleep? What more can you want? Stay! oh, stay in the Great City, I implore you! for if, oh, respectable English people, you *do* come into a pretty country, what do you do? You build your spacious and desirable mansion, and then you level all the rough rocky ground before it; and in lieu of it make a lawn, smooth and level and out of character, as a billiard-table would be, and over the lawn you make yellow snake-like gravel-walks to twist and twine uncomfortably, and all around you first of all put up a high wooden paling, and then within you plant a belt of trees, so that no one can look in, and *you*, oh, respectable English people! cannot look out; and then, looking over your lawn and yellow walks and small laurels—(which you plant there because every one has laurels on their lawn),—looking, I say, over these at a thick belt of larch, or spruce, or Scotch firs, you talk of your charming prospect! And then you toil so laboriously after the Picturesque, which after all, in your heart of hearts, you only care for accompanied with sandwiches and sherry. You make such picnics! You go to lonely mountain tarns, your mind disquieted with the idea of the ale being spoiled by being shaken, or the forks being left behind, or the driver sitting inadvertently on the top of the veal-pie. You select a nice smooth spot; there you at once sit down and eat and drink. The nice smooth spot is at the bottom of a hollow, and of course commands no view; the tarn is beyond that rising ground, but you know it is near you, and the mountain air makes you *so* hungry, and after all, the interior of the veal-pie is a very charming prospect: and then, when lunch is over, one says, "How dismal it is up here;" a second, "How cold;" a third, "I'm sure it's going to rain, we'd better be getting home;" and you gather up your possessions, and home you go as fast as the lunch will allow you: and of the tarn you have seen little more than you would have had you remained in Westbourne Terrace; and by the side of the mountain tarn, lonely and solemn as those on which Sir Galahad found floating for him magic boats, you leave your sandwich papers blowing about, and your egg-shells, and your broken bottles. O, English people! is the grandeur of Nature revealed to you only in your plaster heathen temples? Would you not cry, "the glory has departed from my house," if you found old sandwich papers blowing about there? Is not the mountain holy ground? And then, oh, pilgrims of the beauties of Nature! you remember Helvellyn only as the place where one of your hard eggs was bad; and Thirlmere or Grasmere, you don't know which, was that beautiful place where you had such excellent eel-pie; and at Blea Tarn the ale was forgotten; and Coniston was the place where you were all so hungry; and Patterdale

you did not see; you got half-way there, and then you discovered the prog-basket was left behind, so you came back. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. "Is not this lake beautiful?" exclaimed an Englishman to his companion, as they crossed the lake of Como on their way to dinner at a friend's. "Oh, hang the lake," answered the Englishman, No. 2; think only of the good roast leg of mutton we shall have at Smith's to-night."

Between Rydal and Grasmere, on the old road, is the Wishing Gate. Whoever wishes for anything here will surely obtain it, if it be for his good; so if he does not get it, he may be sure it was a bad wish. I never heard of any one getting their wish; a proof how evil inclined the heart of man must be.

About a couple of miles from Grasmere is Eastdale Tarn, a wild mountain lake; no trees, no shrubs take away from its naked beauty; rocks and steep crags, and knolls covered with moss and fern, surround it; no living thing is seen round it save a few sheep; no sound of life disturbs the hoarse murmur of the stream which flows from it, except the cry of the hawk floating far, far above your head. There is something wonderfully solemn, awful, indeed, in the stillness and solitude round you; and how any one with a soul could have christened the stream that rushes from the tarn to the lower regions "Buttermilk Gill," I cannot at all tell! Some people think to improve matters by calling it "Sour-milk Gill."

After descending from Eastdale Tarn, you follow the course of the Rothay to Thirlmere, a lake with many *aliases*. Between the Rothay and the high road, as you go to this lake, lies Dunnaibraise, the grave of a king; he lies more royally interred, with these mighty mountains round him, than if he lay in Westminster Abbey or St. George's. The wind moans and laments over his grave, and the clouds ever weep above it; and though this, doubtless, is gratifying to the royal shade, it is much less so to the unfortunate traveller—("Too much of water hadst thou?" Hamlet might have said)—who remembers Dunnaibraise more for the wetting he got there, I fancy, than for its royal grave. But, indeed, to all this district, charming as it is, may be applied, most truthfully, the few but pithy lines written on Devonshire weather—

> The west wind always brings us rain,
> The east wind blows it back again;
> The south wind brings us rainy weather,
> The north wind rain and cold together.

Of all the lakes, Thirlmere, Wythburn Water, Leathe's Water, or Brackmere, for all these names belong to it, is, perhaps, the most disregarded by travellers; few care for more than a glimpse of it as they pass along the high road; a great injustice, I think. It certainly has no great sheet of water to boast of, and the causeway that divides it nearly in two, perhaps, makes it look less than it is: but the head of the lake is singularly fine and wild, and the lower reach is most charmingly pastoral and quiet. I love it dearly, and whenever I become a laker, here will I set up my tent, or maybe build a "spacious and desirable mansion" like my neighbours.

From this point many ascend Helvellyn, which lies on your right as

you advance towards the head of the lake. It was by the side of a tarn on this mountain, the Red Tarn, that the remains of the poor pilgrim of nature, Gough, were found, after having been watched for nearly three months by his dog. Though the story has been told so often in prose and verse, in newspaper, magazine, and guide-book, it still lends an additional interest to this mountain, and few can pass by the spot where he died, alone on the wild mountain-side, without heaving a sigh, especially if the solitary tourist remembers that a stone giving way beneath his feet, a slight fall, a false step even, and the death of Gough, minus the dog, may be his own.

The lines of Walter Scott on this subject are so well known, I feel almost ashamed of inserting them, thinking it an insult to my gentlest of readers to suppose that he or she does not know them. They are so beautiful, though, I cannot refrain:—

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain heather
Where the pilgrim of nature lay stretch'd in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandon'd to weather,
Till the mountain winds wasted the tenantless clay.
Not yet quite deserted, though lowly extended,
For faithful in death his mute fav'rite attended,
The much-loved remains of her master defended,
And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?
How many long days and long weeks didst thou number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart?
And oh! was it meet that—no requiem read o'er him,
No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretched before him—
Unhonoured the pilgrim from life should depart.

Gentle reader, I leave you now. Much more have I to say to you, much more gossiping to pour into your ear; but with the lines of the mighty master ringing in your ear, how dare *I* speak. Gentlest of gentle readers! when next I meet you, I will take you with me to Derwentwater and to Buttermere. We will discourse together of the celebrated earl of the former lake, the celebrated beauty of the latter; we will talk of treason and of felony. But "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," and so, most patient and gentle reader, I wish you heartily farewell! "A word that has been, and must be."

LONGFELLOW.

It is with pleasure that we note the increasing circulation of American poetic literature in this country. Politics, and its growing nationality, may yearly widen the separation of the young republic from its parent stock, but our literature must ever be one and the same. The poets on either shore of the Atlantic have drunk of a common fountain; the same intellectual blood, so to speak, swells the hearts of each—alike they boast the names of Chaucer, Milton, and Shakspeare as their fathers, whether they tune that same instrument which these touched with their inspiring hands, under the primeval shades, and beside the gigantic rivers of the West, or among the homely pasture grounds of merry England. So it should be, and so, we rejoice to say, it is. Nowhere are our living bards more highly appreciated than in America; and the increasing popularity of American poets among us, shows that we are not backward to acknowledge our intellectual fraternity.

It is at present our task, from the writings of this "goodly band of brethren," more especially to select for consideration those of Mr. Longfellow. An edition of this poet's works now lies before us, heralded by a somewhat grandiloquent preface, from the pen of Mr. Gilfillan; at the style of whose encomiums on his author we should, by-the-by, be so ungrateful as to cavil a little, were *we* the prefaced poet. But Mr. Longfellow's success does not depend on the style or taste of any extraneous panegyric; the unaffectedness and healthful morality of his book will ensure it the favour of all right and refined minds. He has not, certainly, as Mr. Gilfillan expresses it, "been dandled like a lion cub on the lap of Terror," and this enviable position not having been his lot, he has wisely abstained from aiming at the themes to which so magnificent an education would have entitled him to aspire; those which he has chosen are natural, pleasing, in many cases eminently poetical, but always congenial to his mind, and well adapted to his powers. Here and there, it is true, one falls upon a commonplace subject, not dressed with originality or power sufficient to atone for its every-day face; but these are forgiven for the sake of the beauty which lies around them, and which possesses two great charms—a very general absence from that mannerism which disfigures too many of the best productions of our living poets—and another far higher, the quiet, manly tone of faith, conscientiousness and resignation which everywhere pervades and exalts it. The book before us, though small in size, contains many parts and parcels, and much more matter for consideration than our limits will allow us to dwell on. It begins with a prelude, in which the past and present tenses are, to our mind, somewhat uncomfortably mixed, and in which the diction is occasionally feeble, and almost childish; but the succeeding poem, beginning, "I heard the trailing garments of the Night," is very beautiful, and there is something most satisfying both to mind and ear in its slow, measured movement. Another poem in the group, entitled, "Voices of the Night," is also a favourite of ours; it is addressed to the planet Mars, the chosen star of the poet's especial regard, who thus sings of it:—

The night is come, but not too soon,
And sinking silently—
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven,
But the cold light of stars;
And the first watch of night is given
To the red light of Mars.

Is it the tender star of love—
The star of love and dreams?
Ah no! from that blue tent above
A hero's armour gleams.

And earnest thoughts within me rise,
When I behold afar,
Suspended in the evening skies
The shield of that red star.

O star of strength! I see thee stand,
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
And I am strong again.

Within my breast there is no light,
But the cold light of stars;
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast;
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm;
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long—
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

There is another poem in this group which we cannot mention so favourably—"The Midnight Mass for the Old Year." What is the reason, and what is the rule, of those short lines, or rather scraps of lines, at the end of each stanza? Some find a rhyme in two lines above, some do not; some are twice the length of others; some are a useless repetition of words, as "a king, a king," "sorely, sorely;" or of the preceding line, as

It is a sound of woe—
A sound of woe.

The effect, as you drop suddenly on these abrupt and misshapen exclamations or assertions, is almost ludicrous; and what does the author propose to gain by them? Not music, surely, nor strength; for in almost every case their omission would not take one jot from the sense. Is it then for the sake of the irregularity, *per se*, that he introduces them? It is a debateable point whether irregularity in metre, however much sanctioned by subject, or an undeniably musical fancy, is not always to be regarded with indulgence rather than favour; but the irregularity here seems to us to possess no such excuse for its appearance.

To the "Voices of the Night" succeeds a spirited ballad—"The Skeleton in Armour," and then come some miscellaneous poems, of which the most striking to our mind are "Excelsior," "A Gleam of Sunshine," and the "Arsenal of Springfield." There is a sweetness, an uncomplaining sorrow, a holiness in "The Gleam of Sunshine," extremely touching. "The Arsenal of Springfield" is very different, but not less beautiful, in style. The metre is peculiarly vigorous, as well as musical. Take for example the following stanzas:—

> Ah, what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
> When the death angel touches those swift keys;
> What loud lament, and dismal miserere,
> Will mingle with their awful symphonies!
>
> I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
> The cries of agony, the endless groan;
> Which, through the ages that have gone before us,
> In long reverberations reach our own.

How infinitely more harmonious, as well as classical, is such a metre as this, than the short-lined, fancy measures in which so many lyrics of the present day are written! Among the "earlier poems" which we find best in order, is a blank-verse piece upon "Autumn," very Wordsworthian in style and feeling. An error has escaped the author in the last line; he tells us that the "man of fervent heart," who looks "on days well spent," shall go "to his long resting-place without a tear." We know, of course, what the poet means, otherwise the expression would convey the idea that such a man went to his grave unwept. "*Pang*" would, we think, be the better adapted word; but this is beyond our province,—we may criticise, but not suggest.

Among the "Poems on Slavery," the "Warning" is good and vigorous; only we wish the word in the last line—the reader will see what we mean when he comes to it—had been more *real*, and a little more dignified.

To the "Poems on Slavery" succeeds a "Dramatic Poem," which appears to us to have too little plot, and too much *talking poetry*, to make a good play; and too little flow, and too much of the familiar play-phraseology, to make a good poem. There is, moreover, an appearance of effort and self-consciousness in it, from which the rest of the book is remarkably free.

And now, to our great contentment, we have reached "Evangeline," the crown of the volume. The subject of this poem is full of capabilities for pathetic and picturesque imagery; and it is in itself no small praise to say that Mr. Longfellow has improved these to the full. He has woven a very touching tale of private sorrow into one of the most affecting incidents recorded perhaps in the history of any nation, and has given a life-like distinctness to his characters, and a graphic colouring to the scenery in which he places them, which makes us feel as if, at some period or other of our existence, we must have sauntered with the farmers of Grand Pré down their village street, and afterwards explored with them the cedar-vaulted breadths of the Mississippi. Before we proceed to give a sketch of the story, or to present our readers with any portion of this beautiful poem, we must prepare them for a fact which will at first, we fear, startle them, as it did us, from their anticipations of enjoyment. "Evangeline" is written in hexameters, a metre so un-

natural, so ill-adapted to the English language, so incapable of being made truly pleasing in it, that we marvel how any poet could have the heart to sacrifice to it a creation of his brain so valuable as the one in question. The best English hexameters can never, after all, be considered as anything but a mere *tour d'adresse*, and should never be employed save as a passing, though ingenious, whim. Had it been otherwise, they would not have slept, unemployed by our successive poets, through so many centuries. In Germany they are much used; but the German language is full of dancing or rolling dactyls, which with us are very rare; and the English hexameter writer is often obliged to piece out his dactyls with hard, sturdy little words, which entirely deprive them of their essential character. But it is not so much its want of music, as the ungenuineness of the English hexameter, which displeases us. It is an anomaly, of no nation or language. The Roman toga has been so pulled and squeezed into the English coat that it is now no costume at all. In adopting the Latin metre, *all* its rules must be observed, or it is *not* adopted; in English this is impossible, the long and short are arbitrarily decreed, according to the necessity of the writer, and the run of the line depends, or ought to depend, entirely on the emphasis of the sense, which induces that cantering and sing-song movement, degrading to the poem, and wearying or vitiating to the ear of the reader. Occasionally this canter stops short, and we are left to stumble and flounder among stocks and stones, through which, with some difficulty, a very rough way is made out—as in "Evangeline," page 184:—

> Children's children sat on his knee, and heard his great watch tick.

We were obtuse enough, we confess, to be a long time making our way through this pass, and even now, when we return to it, we find some difficulty in hitting again upon the track. In justice, however, to Mr. Longfellow, we must say that these instances with him are rare, at least in "Evangeline;" in the translation from the Swedish, which follows, they are more frequent. There is a blemish, however, peculiar to Mr. Longfellow's hexameters, to which we must advert before entering upon the pleasanter part of our task, and this is the constant employment of two monosyllables for the concluding spondee. This is not positively contrary to rule, because we find examples of it occasionally in Latin verse, but it is almost always singularly unmusical. For example:—

> Then came the labourers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank;
> Into the evening air a thin blue column of smoke rose.
> Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greeting the old man.

In the specimen that follows there is a double objection to be made:—

> All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and the *great sun*
> Looked with an eye of love through the golden vapours around him.

Here, in order to gain the rhythm of the line an emphasis must be laid on "great," which suggests the idea that the poet wishes to impress us with the superior magnitude of the diurnal orb in question over those of other systems. No doubt, this may be astronomically correct, but such a scientific distinction is hardly needed in the pastoral poem of "Evangeline." The natural emphasis of the sense would undeniably make a trochaic of these two monosyllables. There are many instances of this kind to be met with in both parts of the poem.

But it is now high time that we should lead our readers over the threshold upon which we have so long detained them, only premising first, as indeed we are bound to do, after having said so much against hexameters in general, and a little against Mr. Longfellow's in particular,—that all which could be done to lessen the irksomeness and importunacy of an unfortunate metre, has been done in this case, by the beauty of expression, the unaffectedness, and steady eloquence of the poet. This is, no doubt, a triumph; but why, alas! should he have to triumph over himself?

The foundation of the tale is the despotic ejection of the French colonists of Nova Scotia, then called Acadia, from their homes and their country by the authority of the British Government. They were accused of assisting the French, by whom they had, in 1713, been ceded to England, against their new masters, and their exile and dispersion was the means employed to prevent the recurrence of the offence. At Grand Pré the men were suddenly assembled in the church, and, after hearing this tyrannical sentence, were there detained prisoners till the time of their embarkation—a scene of anguish and confusion in which wives and husbands, parents and children, were carried to different ships, and thus separated, in some cases never to be re-united on earth.

The poem opens with a beautiful description of the village of Grand Pré and of the surrounding scenery, and goes on to tell us of Benedict Bellefontaine, its wealthiest farmer,—of the beautiful Evangeline, his daughter, "the pride of the village,"—and of his farm, the description of which, with its barns, themselves a village, bursting with hay and its "odorous cornlofts," might well excite the envy of the most contented farmer of Old or New England. To the sycamore-shaded porch of Benedict's house came many a young lover to pay his homage to Evangeline. "But," we are told, "among all who came, young Gabriel only was welcome." He was the son of Basil, the blacksmith (the description of whose forge by night, is, by-the-by, a most graphic picture), and had been Evangeline's playfellow from infancy. Their betrothal takes place on the eve of that day upon which the cloud burst over these happy villagers. The whole of this evening scene, both within doors and without, is excellent, full of truthful beauty, with the exception of two lines, justly criticised by Mr. Gilfillan, though not upon such high ground as we could wish:—

> Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of Heaven,
> Blossomed the lovely stars, the *forget-me-nots of the angels.*

We could scarcely believe that these lines, so affected, so meaningless, so degrading, if we may so speak, to both the objects introduced, could have proceeded from the same pen whose simplicity had lately been delighting us. But Mr. Longfellow is too apt, in common with some other poets, to introduce the image of angels as mere adjuncts in description; forgetting seemingly, the reality of these great beings, superior to ourselves, and moving on divine messages about us in their awful invisibility. Once realise this truth—and how shocking do such conceits and *prettinesses* appear!

The description of the scene in the church, and of the close of that melancholy day in the village without, contains beauty of a very high order, both poetical and moral. Five days after their imprisonment, the

men were marched under guard to the beach, where the women had brought down their household goods:—

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking;
Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too late, saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms with wildest entreaties.
So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,
While, in despair on the shore, Evangeline stood with her father.
Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight
Deepened and darkened around—and in haste the refluent ocean
Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach
Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slippery seaweed.
Further back, in the midst of the household goods and the waggons,
Like to a gipsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,
All escape cut off by the sea and the sentinels near them,
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.
Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing ocean,
Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving
Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the sailors.
Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from their pastures;
Sweet was the moist still air with the odour of milk from their udders;
Lowing they waited and long at the well-known bars of the farmyard,—
Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand of the milkmaids.
Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus sounded;
Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no light from the windows.

During this miserable night, Evangeline's father, broken down by his anguish, dies upon the shore. In the morning, the village priest, Father Felician, with some of his flock, bury the old man by the sea:—

And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,
Lo, with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congregation,
Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges.
'Twas the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,
With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying landward.
Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking;
And with the ebb of that tide the ships sailed out of the harbour,
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore and the village in ruins.

With these fine lines ends the first part of "Evangeline;" and before proceeding in this pleasant revision, we must note the skill and good taste with which the *machinery* of these events is managed. There was much work to be done, and Mr. Longfellow has ably performed it; succinctly, but not hurriedly; with necessary distinctness of detail, but without ever falling into the prosaic. We admire, also, the reserve with which he employs the ample opportunities for expatiating on the pathetic which his subject afforded him. Instead of losing, the pathos gains strength a thousandfold by such reserve. There are no declamations, no appeals to compassion, no lamentations—either on the part of the poet or his personages; he tells his tale in a straightforward way, but with a heart full of the poetical feeling of it;—he needs no other resources but the subject and the feeling, and, in the wisdom of good taste, he has refrained from employing more.

The second part carries us, with the patient and true-hearted Evangeline, through many years and many scenes of disappointment, in search of her lost Gabriel:—

Sometimes a murmur, a hearsay, an inarticulate whisper
Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her forwards;
Sometimes she spake with those who had seen her beloved and knew him;
But it was long ago in some far-off place or forgotten.

At last intelligence reaches some of the Acadian sufferers that a knot of their fellow-exiles are settled in the beautiful country of Louisiana; there is reason to believe Basil of the number—they resolve to join this colony. Evangeline goes with them, full of happy anticipation, and Father Felician, her faithful friend, accompanies her.

We admire much the description of the scenery of the Mississippi. Everywhere, indeed, Mr. Longfellow excels in his scenery. Is not, however, the idea of the owl's "demoniac laughter" too harsh and violent for the moonlight picture in which it occurs?

One sultry noon, while the wanderers are sleeping under a willowy isle, a boat approaches, at the helm of which sits a "careworn youth," who, "weary with waiting, unhappy and restless," goes as a trapper to seek in the western wilds "oblivion of self and of sorrow." This boat passes unperceived on the *opposite* side of the island. At such a cruel turn of fate, we felt a strong momentary impulse to put aside the book which drew so painfully upon our feelings, but it is one which, if once begun, cannot be left unfinished. We are, however, inclined to agree with Mr. Gilfillan, when he says that "Evangeline's search after her lover becomes at last oppressive and painful."

There is no doubt a very exalted moral in the picture of constancy and patience long tried, long enduring, and only touching their fruition as they leave the shores of this life; yet the moral of this same patience, blest at last by hope fulfilled on earth, while not less beautiful, comes perhaps more home to our natural ideas of Providential justice and beneficence. This is, however, a mere matter of opinion on which we are not sure that we have ourselves decided; and of course, if Mr. Longfellow has chosen the austerer, and perhaps higher, line, it is matter of praise, not blame, that he should have succeeded in exciting a very painful interest for his meek but strong-hearted sufferers.

On arriving at their journey's end, the exiles find themselves indeed among old friends. Basil, the blacksmith, now a wealthy farmer, is the first to greet them, and promises Evangeline that early the next day they would follow and overtake his son, who had but that morning left him. The evening is spent in mirth and dancing, from which Evangeline steals away into the garden, and looks out upon the prairie; and here we are allowed to gather from her lips one brief but touching outbreak of love and yearning. We wish the passages immediately preceding and following were more worthy of it, but though possessing some poetic beauty, they are much blemished by overstrained expressions, and by conceits concerning fireflies, dews, and flowers. A little further on, we have a more serious objection to make. As Basil and Evangeline are setting forth in quest of Gabriel, Father Felician says to them—

> See that you bring back the prodigal son from his fasting and famine,
> And, too, the foolish virgin that slept when the bridegroom was coming.

To say nothing of the *artistic* error of putting such a speech into the mouth of the good old priest, how could Mr. Longfellow belie his own religious mind so far as to make a jesting use of these expressions—the latter especially, from one of the most solemn lessons ever communicated to mankind? As a general rule, every quotation or adaptation of scriptural expression for any but a strictly religious purpose, should be

avoided;* how much more, then, words so sanctified as those in question? And here seems the most fitting occasion to make another remark which presses on us. In the same passage to which we were lately adverting occurs this line:—

> Over her head the stars, the thoughts of God in the heavens.

We are not quite certain of the exact meaning even of this expression; whatever it may be, however, we would fain the expression were not there. Further on we find the following lines:—

> And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,
> Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

This passage, though not so objectionable, because more true and natural, yet partakes of the error of the foregoing one. Holy scripture teems with instances where the beauty and magnificence of nature are employed as types of the divine attributes, but we are not authorised to reverse the simile, and employ the mention of these in order to give strength to a description of nature. Natural objects may be, and are, suggestive of the thought of God, but here that thought is obviously introduced to illustrate the natural object. In a milder form of the same fault, Mr. Longfellow compares the setting sun to Moses veiling his face; and the trees struggling with the wind, to Jacob wrestling with the angel.

Basil and Evangeline are disappointed in their anticipation of overtaking Gabriel before he reaches the wilds, and follow his track into the prairies:—

> Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and sunshine,
> Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple amorphas.
> Over them wander the buffalo herds, and the elk, and the roebuck;
> Over them wander the wolves, and herds of riderless horses:
> Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary with travel.
>
> ---
>
> Here and there rise groves from the margin of swift-running rivers,
> And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of the desert,
> Climbs down the dark ravine, to dig for roots by the brook-side.

Into these wilds time does not permit us to follow Evangeline; we may not watch and wait with her in the wigwams of the mission, nor travel with her into the depths of the Michigan forest, where she found the lodge which Gabriel had indeed inhabited, "deserted, and fallen to ruins."

> Fair was she, and young, when in hope began the long journey;
> Faded was she, and old, when in disappointment it ended.

She then took up her abode in Pennsylvania, and here led for many years the life of a Sister of Mercy, visiting the poorest lanes of the city, the garrets of disease and wretchedness. Meanwhile,

> Gabriel was not forgotten, within her heart was his image,
> Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as when last she beheld him,
> Only more beautiful made by his death-like silence and absence.

How touching—how true to nature is this!

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* No one professing to write religiously has transgressed this rule more flagrantly—more profanely, we might add—than Mr. Gilfillan in his preface to the book in question; where he tells us that a poet must "come eating and drinking," and that "he must be touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, and have been tempted in all points as we are." The kind of half-apology which prefaces this sentence only makes the matter worse.

At last a pestilence broke out in the city; the hospital was filled, and Evangeline passed her days in a never-wearied labour of love. The end will be guessed. One morning, among the new occupants of the sick beds, she sees stretched the form of an old man with thin grey hair; but in the morning light his features assume for a moment the form of earlier manhood—it is Gabriel, he is dying; but he lives to hear that still cherished voice, to receive her kiss, to die with his head upon her breast; and then she lifts up her submissive thanksgiving for the meeting.

Any quotations from this beautiful and touching close we should deem almost a sacrilege; we have been ashamed even to make this abstract of it. But whatever liberties we may have taken with this, or any other part of the poem, Mr. Longfellow must forgive us, for the sake of our sincere admiration of its very great beauty, its tone, and the skill with which a story, by no means easy to manage well, has been conducted. On the whole, we prefer the first part; there is a life, a contrast, a dramatic power in it, of which the necessarily more monotonous character of the second part would not allow. Few writers would have escaped the charge of tediousness, in the description of those wanderings and repeated disappointments, so well as Mr. Longfellow has done. In his rhythm, the same marks of carelessness which sometimes disfigure his lyrics may be frequently detected, especially as regards the cæsural pause. Often, it is true, he gives the English hexameter all the harmony of which it is capable; but often again, by a manifest heedlessness, he exaggerates its defects. That many more such pure and beautiful creations of the poet's mind as Evangeline may find their way to our shores, we sincerely hope; we shall welcome them with open arms, but we confess the welcome will be one of more unmingled delight should they come to us *not* attired in hexametrical robes.

We have only time to note very briefly the poems which remain. Most of these are translations, more or less good, according to the originals chosen, some of which we should have thought were hardly worth the trouble of the version. A few original poems succeed, of which the most striking is the "Occultation of Orion." "The Bridge" is pleasing, and still more so "Carillon." The poet concludes with a somewhat melancholy lay, entitled "The Curfew," in which he sings—

The book is completed,
  And closed like the day;
And the hand that has written it
  Lags it away.

Dim grow its fancies,
  Forgotten they be;
Like coals in the ashes
  They darken and die.

Song sinks into silence,
  The story is told;
The windows are darkened,
  The hearthstone is cold.

Darker and darker
  The black shadows fall,
Sleep and oblivion
  Reign over all.

We hope this is only a strain of that would-be pensiveness in which the poets of all ages are occasionally privileged to indulge. That "sleep and oblivion" will *not* reign over Mr. Longfellow's works we are well persuaded; and we believe also that, in that healthful and abundant mind, if the memory of the fancies it has lately thrown off "darken and die, like coals in the ashes," it is only to make room for others, whose genial radiance will soon start up to cheer and enlighten alike the minds of the poet and his readers.

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER X.

THE grey light of morning had scarcely rendered objects visible, when the youth whom we have called Arkel, mounted on a strong black horse, rode forth through the silent streets of Antwerp. The yet chilly atmosphere of a spring night, increased the wretched feeling of desolation which ordinarily creeps over the early traveller who finds himself abroad when nothing is yet stirring—when the busy life of towns has not yet begun, and everything, animate and inanimate, seems wrapped in the same calm, deep repose.

His horse's hoofs re-echoed and vibrated along the streets as if he had been wandering through a deserted city. The very boats, with their tall masts, struggling into form through the dim light, seemed to share the general slumber, so still did the dark masses appear as he cast upon them a careless look while crossing the many bridges that intersected the streets through which he had to pass. The thick vapours were rising from the canals; and the young man, probably under the disagreeable influence of the scene and hour, muffled his face more completely in the collar of his cloak, drew its folds tighter around him, and pressed his barret as deep as its form permitted over his brows.

He looked in vain around to dispel the uncomfortable sensation which crept over him; his eye fell on no living creature, not even of the brute creation. He could discern no familiar object; everything seemed strange, and, at that moment, possessed rather the disadvantages than the charms of novelty. As he rode over the Meerbrugge, however, he looked with something akin to pleasurable feelings on the house in which he had spent a few hours the day before. He expected to see it offer the same image of repose that pervaded everything around him, and mechanically reined in his horse to bestow upon it a parting glance.

To his great surprise, he perceived that one of the shutters was thrown open, and a form, which he thought, so far as the uncertain light permitted him to decide, was that of a female, seemed to be inhaling the damp and keen night-air. As he peered more closely he became convinced that a white handkerchief covered the face of the watcher. Could it be Margaret? or her mother? Whoever it was, what could be her motive for being there at such an hour?

Whilst these thoughts were passing through his mind, he himself became the object of attention to the person he was examining; but instead of continuing her gaze, on perceiving that he had stopped under the casement, she closed the shutter violently, and left him to his conjectures, without any clue by which he might bring them to a solution; and yet a secret conviction, a prescience, such as we so often experience about trifles, and which seldom enlightens us upon things of greater moment, told him that the figure he had seen so indistinctly was no other than the burgher's fair young daughter in tears and in sorrow, who had sought relief from a feverish night in the cool breezes of morning.

The presentiments of Arkel had not deceived him; but, what he little guessed, the tears which Margaret shed that night, the first tribute she had yet paid to sorrow, had been caused by his own mysterious appearance in the house of her father. Having but a very faint and incorrect idea of what had passed between him and her uncle, and of the feelings which had long swayed the latter, she had guessed so much of the truth, that to the stranger's interview with her uncle was due his sudden determination to separate finally from his family—to embark in enterprises the nature of which she scarcely comprehended, but which, perhaps, for that very reason seemed to her the more dark and dangerous.

The disinclination she had conceived towards him was strengthened by overhearing her father declare that he did not much like the looks of the youth; and instead of answering her uncle with his usual alacrity when he was informed by him of the extensive orders that Arkel had brought from the Prince of Orange, he had contented himself with dryly requesting him to take that altogether upon himself, as he was not ambitious of having anything to do with it. She had marked with anxious attention every detail, however minute, of that day, and recalled each and all in turn during the sleepless hours of the night, until every one became indelibly impressed on her remembrance. All the advantages with which the young stranger had appeared to her to be gifted, became at once obliterated from her mind. She saw in him only the cause of her first sorrow—one of those restless spirits who, wandering from roof to roof, carry with them some evil spell wherewith, sooner or later, to destroy the peace of each. His image having been for some hours the theme of her meditations, it is no wonder if no light, however uncertain, could prevent her from identifying his person; nor can it appear strange that, under the impulse of anger, and what she conceived to be just indignation, she would not suffer her eyes to rest upon him even for an instant.

Little did Arkel imagine he left such unfavourable impressions behind him. Young and ardent, he was, after his own manner, pleased with everybody and everything; and it was natural that he should believe he had made a no less agreeable impression upon those with whom it had suited his purpose for a time to associate. In this opinion he was confirmed by remembering the few words he had overheard spoken by Margaret to Chievosa, by which he had been pleased and even flattered. Wholly unconscious of having distressed any earthly being, and perfectly satisfied with the result of his mission, his fancy busied itself with the scenes of the previous day, and with his future prospects, which to his gay imagination seemed to glow with many a bright promise.

Paul had made a strong impression upon him. His firmness of character, straightforwardness of intention, and simplicity of manner, were strongly calculated to strike and to please a generous nature. With a few more such agents, what might not be undertaken and executed? He also dwelt with pleasurable surprise upon the grace and beauty of the young heiress. He never could have divined—unfamiliar as he was with the class to which she belonged—that among its members beings possessed of so much real dignity as Margaret and her uncle could be found.

He pondered with some curiosity upon the probable issue of Chievosa's courtship; and he was no less surprised now than he had been the day before, at the indifference with which that person appeared to be treated

by his young mistress. Could any maiden view with coldness one so gifted in all those external advantages which at all times, and in all ages, have been supposed to charm the female heart? He lost himself in a maze of reflections concerning the Spaniard, whom he felt certain he had somewhere seen before; but with each effort at recollection, his powers of thought became more inextricably entangled; and, with the variableness of youth, all combination of ideas became, at length, lost in a vain endeavour to remember some part of the song, in the performance of which the youth in question had so much distinguished himself. Absorbed in these and other reflections—if, indeed, we may give his thoughts such an appellation—he gained the Kaiserpoort; when, fortunately, recollecting that he had a long ride before him, he cast a farewell look around, pressed the sides of his horse, and soon left a considerable line of route behind him.

Arkel was of a temperament warm and highly enthusiastic, mingled with no slight tinge of the romantic. The secrecy and mystery which must constantly surround the steps of one who pursues the dangerous path upon which he had recklessly entered—the importance with which such a career would invest one whose extreme youth might otherwise, in spite of his high pretensions, cause him to be overlooked—the excitement attending upon such enterprises as would naturally result from his situation—had been chiefly instrumental in drawing him into the party he had embraced. The possible evils which might accrue to himself, or to others, from such a measure, were completely forgotten in the romance of the venture. Urged on by those who easily foresaw that one of his great house and youthful ardour would be of the utmost use in an enterprise of no small delicacy, personal risk, and responsibility, he had undertaken with delight the mission to Antwerp—the first of any importance in which he had been engaged—and he was now rapidly advancing on the road to Bois le Duc, where many of his party were assembled and anxiously awaiting him.

The chill of night soon yielded to the cheerful influence of day, and Arkel watched the first yellow streaks that faintly tinged the horizon, until the pale tint deepened, and, by slow degrees, spread over the skies, whose uniform sheet of dull grey now grew with every instant more light and mellow, until the sun rose in all its splendour. The air became warmer, although the breeze had lost none of its freshness, and the young horseman felt cheered and invigorated as he rode onward with unabated rapidity.

The flat surface of the *Campine*, broken only by waters and dikes, gradually gave way to solid ground of a more agreeable aspect. The low furze, here and there spread over the landscape, became more and more thick, and soon intermingled with brushwood and occasional clusters of trees; whilst the cattle, lying about in picturesque groups, animated the verdant fields. The sun, although the spring was not far advanced, had become sufficiently ardent to render refreshing the sight of the large forest of Grœtenhoot, which he was now fast approaching; and he drew in his rein, as much for the relief of his horse, as to enjoy the fragrance of the young trees exhaling their perfume under its rays.

He rode leisurely for some time along a broad alley of trees, upon which he had entered, lulled by the monotonous twittering of the birds into a dreamy mood, when he was suddenly aroused by gay though dis-

tant sounds, which told his experienced ear that he was about to fall in with the chase; and he had no difficulty in conjecturing of whom the party was likely to be composed. His first movement was to urge forward his heated steed, who, like his master, seemed animated afresh by the music to which he was accustomed; but, recollecting in time that it was his object to avoid, not to court, rencontres, he checked him as suddenly; and although he trusted much to his being unattended, and to his altered costume, which not a little disguised his person, he thought it better to avoid the present meeting, and with it all inquiries which he might, perhaps, have found it somewhat inconvenient to answer.

Being in the more open and frequented part of the forest, and the sounds approaching nearer every minute, with a sigh, he determined upon striking off into one of the apparently endless tracts that extended on either side of the alley. Although, having frequently followed the hounds in that very forest, he was well acquainted with Grœtenhoot and its environs, the path he had chosen did not seem familiar to him; it was more wild in its aspect, and less trodden, than any he had yet taken. As he advanced, obliged occasionally to force his way through the tangled brushwood, the sounds of the chase seemed to recede, and gradually die away in the distance. The path, at length, became more open and less encumbered; and he pressed forward with more ease along the straight, clear vista, which now presented itself, until it broke upon a glade whose aspect invited him to pause and breathe his horse.

The soft green turf spread around like a carpet; the tall trees, by which the spot was encircled, interwove their long branches above in the form of a light dome, through whose apertures the blue sky appeared the more calm and azure for being intercepted by its delicate tracery. On almost all sides, except the avenue up which he had ridden, the spaces between the larger trees were filled with thick-growing underwood of various kinds, as if to render this natural bower more secret and lonely.

Scarcely had he time to cast an admiring glance around him, when the cry of the hounds again became distinctly audible, and some of the huntsmen seemed to be at no great distance from him. Obeying his first impulse, he thrust himself as far under the trees as the thickness of the bushes would admit of, hoping, however, at the same time, that by good fortune the huntsmen might pass through some more open avenue in his vicinity. He had not been ensconced in his retreat more than a few minutes, when he became aware, by the peculiar vibration of the earth, that a horse was advancing at full speed along the same alley whence he had emerged; and the next instant the object that had excited his attention came in view.

But, instead of a horseman equipped for the chase, the light form of a lady, mounted on a beautiful jennet, burst upon his sight, and his quick eye soon recognised the fair rider. Her sky-blue velvet cap was thrown back off her brow; and the light hair, which, in the agitation of the exercise, had escaped from under it, waved back in graceful though untrained masses from her face. Her well-shaped head was very much raised, and the eagerness of youth and pleasure was visible in her glistening eye, and the unconscious smile that played around her lips. So absorbed was she in the pleasing sensation of the moment, that Arkel hoped, even if she were to ride up to the place where he stood, she might still pass by without bestowing upon him any notice, which seemed the more probable that she

was quite alone and unattended. As she drew nearer, the eyes of the lady wandered with delight over the scene which opened on her view, and, as Arkel had anticipated, partly hidden as he was, he did not immediately attract her attention. The instinct of her palfrey was, however, more easily roused, and his shyness soon made her aware of the vicinity of a stranger. At first, a feeling of timidity seemed to come over her. She was about to turn her horse's head and make a precipitate retreat, when a slight movement of the animal which Arkel bestrode displayed more of his person than was before visible. This appeared to awaken the lady's curiosity; she hesitated for one more instant, then rode up slowly, though still cautiously, towards the place where the young man was stationed. He saw that he was recognised, and deeming concealment to be more than superfluous, he advanced boldly to meet her, addressing her in terms of intimacy and affection.

"You here, Isabel? I little expected the pleasure of seeing you this morning."

"Nay, the surprise is all on my side," said the lady, eyeing her companion's simple and dusty attire with an investigating look; "and, perhaps, the pleasure too," she added, with a smile; "but my presence is easily explained—I am in the train of the princess, who hunts here to-day; Philip and Charles are with us — they'll come up presently, I doubt not."

"But not this way, I hope?" said Arkel.

"I suppose not; it was a mere chance that brought me here—a caprice of Phœbe's," she replied, patting her horse's neck with her delicate hand; "and I yielded, as usual, because he never fails to take me where I should wish to be, had I but as much foresight as himself. What a sweet place this is!"

"Certainly," said Arkel, somewhat abstractedly; "but, Isabel, you must not tell Philip, nor Charles, nor any one else, of our unforeseen meeting. I have grave motives for asking this favour, and you must grant it."

"Well, if you say so, I suppose I must. I see there is something under all this, but later you shall tell me more about it. Hark! there! the dogs warn us—I must on, or I shall lose my chance of the sport. Stand by, Lamoral, and let me go." As the young maiden spoke, a slight degree of impatience seemed to pass over her delicate, almost infantine, features, but Arkel's hand was still on her rein.

"One moment, Isabel; give me but one moment more. You are alone, no help is near—ride not so recklessly, dearest, for the sake of all who love you. Think of the many accidents that might befall you—of the fate of the unhappy Mary of Burgundy, of whose memory you are so fond. Like that princess, you take too much pleasure in the sport."

"You know not, Lamoral, what a keen delight I find in it, or you and others would not be so desirous of debarring me from it. If the princess had not particularly desired my presence, I certainly should not have been here to-day; and yet I never feel so strong a hold on life and health as when borne on by my fleet palfrey beneath the green boughs of the forest. The rapidity of the motion, the freshness of the air, the cheerful sounds of the chase, the ground re-echoing to the horse's hoofs, the barking of the dogs, the gay notes of the horns, the general excitement of the scene, —oh! you know not, Lamoral, how bracing, how invigorating to me is the noble sport! But now pray—pray, Lamoral, let me pass!"

She spoke with an enthusiasm that brought a faint tinge of the rose to mingle with the transparent lilies of her complexion; but it faded almost instantaneously. Arkel withdrew his hand from her rein, and freed from the restraint, she paused but one instant more.

"You are coming soon to Purmerende, I hope," said she; "we are all there." And without awaiting his reply, she urged her jennet forward.

So diminutive was her form, and so peculiar and fairy-like her style of beauty, that it was impossible to gaze on her in that sylvan spot, without thinking of the aërial forms with which legendary lore has so often peopled the lonely glades of the forest. Perhaps the mind of Arkel might be busy with some such fancy, as he looked after her with a thoughtful air until she was lost to view among the trees: he then turned again his attention to the scene around him.

On a closer investigation, he perceived that the spot on which he stood was surrounded by avenues and clearings that had at first escaped his notice, hidden as they were by the intervening underwood. But he soon found that, although he could plainly see into, to enter them was a matter of some difficulty. He was meditating an attempt of this kind, when his movements were arrested by the sight of another horsewoman advancing with frightful velocity along the alley into which he was about to plunge. She was mounted on a coal-black horse of a remarkable breed, urged to his utmost speed, as if borne onward by unseen wings; a noble hound, dark as night, bounded by his side, and it seemed as if, lost in the emulation of speed, these noble animals obeyed no law but the impulse of their own fiery natures. One glance at the lady, whose severe grace of aspect was increased by the dark hunting garb and black velvet bonnet with streaming white plume which she wore, convinced him that she held the reins with a firm though light hand; and her flashing dark eyes and expanded nostrils plainly spoke the eagerness that would gladly have outstripped the winds.

A gigantic oak, with its huge gnarled limbs spreading in every direction, cast its broad shade across the road. The eye of Arkel fell on one branch which a ray of the sun, perchance, gilded more vividly than the rest. It projected right over the course pursued by the huntress: on she came, and now Arkel saw, what had at first escaped him, that it boded danger to the reckless rider. His lips parted to warn—but, all too late, the sound died away in a vague murmur of horror as he beheld the lady hurried forward, with an impetus that nought could check, to meet the shock; the next instant the barret flew from her brow, and she lay apparently lifeless on the ground. The steed staggered and reared, as the rein was involuntarily tightened by its falling rider; but the instant her hand relinquished its hold, and the loosened girths retained the saddle no longer, the frightened animal dashed forward with increased velocity, and was soon lost to view. Not so the faithful hound: all else forgotten, he crouched by the side of his mistress, gazing with melancholy intelligence on her prostrate form.

The whole was but the work of a moment. Arkel had sprung from his horse on first discovering the danger; but as he was preparing to force his way through the bushes, voices were heard calling loudly from various directions, and many cavaliers, decked out in the gayest manner, rode leisurely up the avenue.

One glance at the scene before them changed their carelessness into haste and terror. Arkel, still hidden by his position, kept it rather from

a feeling of torpor, such as comes over the mind of the young and inexperienced at the sight of an unexpected catastrophe, than from any design or desire of further concealment. The dismounted cavaliers soon surrounded the lady, but their consternation and alarm was so great as to prevent their affording any effectual succour.

"Seek her ladies," cried one. "Bring water!" ordered another, in an authoritative manner. "Help! for God's sake, help!—the princess is dead! exclaimed a third. "She has only fainted," assured a fourth. But though all spoke, none moved to obey.

Their useless clamours continued to augment, when suddenly the lady moved, sighed deeply, then opened her eyes. She seemed at first hardly to comprehend what had happened, but gradually consciousness as well as life returned; she rose hastily from her recumbent posture, and waved back, with a haughty gesture, those who would have supported her.

"I thank you, my lords," she said, with as calm and unruffled a dignity as if she had but risen from the couch of easy repose, instead of the moss which had well-nigh proved a bed of death—"I thank you; you mean kindly, but I need no further help. I was merely stunned, I believe, but there is no pain—none whatever. Where is my barret? Ah! there," pointing to the spot where it lay. She took it from the hand of the young noble who proffered it, then continued gazing round. "Where is my horse? Not hurt, I hope?"

"We have not seen him. Doubtless he is fled," said one of the train; "but your highness's accident having now put an end to the day's sport, a litter ——"

"Not so! not so!" said the princess, hastily. "I thank you, gentlemen, for the interest you show me; but you push it to extremes. Which of you has a horse that is not fatigued? I will mount him."

Respectful remonstrances were now strongly urged by all who stood around the person of Margaret of Parma. For a time she listened, as if half yielding to their persuasions; but at that moment the horns blew notes of promise; the barking of the approaching dogs announced the game not far off. The ruling passion of the house of Burgundy rose powerfully in her bosom; her calmness gave way; a frown contracted her brow; her eye grew stern, and her voice sounded harsher than usual, with impatience, as she turned to the group around her.

"Which amongst you, I say, has a horse at my disposal? There is no time to be lost; we must mount and away. No more words, pray; I have heard enough. Philip of Egmont, your steed seems fresh: there—change the saddle, quick; that's well; your hand."

Young in years, but ripe in the wisdom of courts, whilst the rest hesitated, the young nobleman whom she addressed hastened to prepare, with his own hands, the powerful animal, of Flemish breed, which he had bestridden, for its noble freight, and respectfully helped the princess to horse.

By this time Arkel had sufficiently recovered from the shock his feelings had received on seeing the precarious situation of the princess, to think of his own. Perceiving she needed no further assistance, and that she was surrounded by familiar faces, he determined to remain where he was until they should have dispersed. As he came to this resolution, something broke through the bushes near him with great violence; he did not see the object, but he felt convinced, by the nature of the bound,

that it was the stag. Emerging from another avenue, the dogs, followed by ladies, nobles, and huntsmen, rushed by; and so absorbed were the fair huntresses in the exciting business of the moment, that they heeded not the efforts of the young nobles to attract their attention, but galloped past the place where stood the princess and her party. She was now fairly seated, and young Egmont had quitted her stirrup.

"Stand back, my lords," said Margaret, grasping the rein tighter. "Nay, urge me no farther! Believe me, I am not hurt. But now to horse—to horse quickly, and follow." She struck the willing steed, who bounded forward, and the princess soon left her train behind.

All prepared to follow as fast as they could. A friend offered young Egmont a place behind him until they should fall in with the led horses; and their extreme hurry, and the want of room for the equestrian evolutions in which they indulged, added not a little to the general confusion. They mounted and dismounted, lost and recovered their seats and jewelled bonnets, with shouts of youthful hilarity, strangely contrasting with the dread and alarm that had reigned amongst them but a few minutes before. Finally, riding forward, shouting and laughing as they ducked beneath the branch that had nearly proved so fatal to their noble mistress, they pursued the track of the chase.

Arkel gazed after them with a dizzy eye, as the last of their dancing plumes disappeared behind the foliage. A joyous *morte* was soon blown; but, softened by distance, the well-known air appeared more sweet; the chase had swept by him like the flitting, unsteady forms of a dream, and the dying cadence which he now listened to sounded faint and vague on his ear like music heard in slumber.

Leisurely remounting, and leaving the covert in which he had lain *perdu*, he rode slowly on. As he approached the place where the princess had fallen, he paused to gaze upon the ancient oak, whose branches had well-nigh proved so deadly.

He was about to resume his onward movement, and had turned his horse's head for that purpose, when his eye was attracted by some white object which lay, half-concealed, beneath the long grass and wild flowers of the forest, amongst the straggling roots of the tree. A nearer inspection induced him to dismount. He advanced to the spot, and raised from the ground a small packet, which he perceived, with much agitation, bore, affixed to it, in yellow wax, the well-known seal of Spain. It was evidently a document of considerable importance; for a cramped hand had endorsed the words "secret" and "private," and, in the easily-recognised, bold, sprawling characters of the princess, had been added the words "most secret—most private." It had, probably, been remitted to her in the hurry of her departure for the chase, when, not choosing to relinquish the day's sport, she had, after hastily perusing it, thrust it into her bosom, having first marked it with precaution, in order that she might not, by any possible error, confuse it with other and more public papers.

Arkel's first impulse was to return it into the hands of the owner, from the folds of whose dress it must have fallen. He had not, however, ridden many paces with that intention, when apparently some new thought struck him; for, yielding to some sudden impulse, he wheeled round, and, with a countenance sterner than usual, dashed the spurs into his horse's sides, and rode off rapidly in another direction.

Chapter XI.

At no great distance from Harlem, unprotected by outer walls, lay the little town of Purmerend. It was neatly built, and bore the visible stamp of solid comfort and well-doing. Its grey buildings, and its moated, turreted castle, surrounded by greensward extending far away on every side, appeared like an island rising from the bosom of an emerald sea. The ground, in some parts, exhibited those vivid, beautiful, yet treacherous tints, that might owe their peculiarity to waters concealed beneath its yielding surface; but it was not so with the fair fields of the Beemster. The cattle might there graze in peace, and the traveller traverse with a bold foot its large expanse of soft verdure. Once, indeed, a large lake had spread its silvery waters over what now formed pleasant meadows. Tradition even spoke of a fair syren who, in days of yore, not content with toying with the water-lilies by the light of the moon, and lulling sprites to rest with her song, had even basked in the rays of the sun, and suffered the morning breeze to waft the notes of her enchanted lay to the ears of man. She was caught, the imprudent one, and brought in sad captivity to Harlem, where she lingered many years, and was finally buried. But that was many a long year back. The industry of man had caused the flower to grow where once the wave had broken, and the name of Purmerend alone kept the memory of past things still fresh in the minds of the people.

Fair as ever was syren in olden time, within the grey walls of the castle there dwelt one who, from her peculiar loveliness—combining much of the wild, untutored graces of childhood, from which she seemed scarce to have emerged, with a fawn-like timidity wholly her own—might yet, to a fanciful imagination, have embodied the spirit of the place.

As she half reclined and half sat upon a velvet cushion at the feet of a lady considerably her senior, Isabel of Egmont exhibited nothing of that animation which had been so all-pervading in the forest of Grœtenhoot. Her beauty was of no ordinary style, such as would have struck the vulgar eye. A form considerably below the common height, a lily-complexion that knew of no alliance with the rose, the small unmarked features, were all in striking contrast with the beings who surrounded her, to whom a casual observer would not have imagined her to be bound by any ties of blood.

The lady who occasionally gazed upon Isabel with a look such as a mother alone can bestow, was of a noble though severe aspect. Her form was as much above the usual standard of her sex as that of her daughter was beneath it; and her features, far from exhibiting the small delicacy of Isabel's, might have been termed coarse but for her stateliness of mien. She sat upon a solid bench of oak, richly carved, which adhered to the wall all round the apartment, bearing in front, upon lozenged-shape escutcheons, a series of armorial quarterings belonging to the family of Egmont in right of descent and alliances. Amongst these might be traced the bearings of many of the noblest houses in the Netherlands. The floor—for it was a summer apartment—was of tessellated marble, on which the light that streamed from the windows, at considerable height from the ground, fell mellowed, and, together with an exquisitely carved oaken *Prie-Dieu* of large dimensions, wrought by the most celebrated artists of that day, imparted to the interior somewhat of that cool repose peculiar to chapels.

The ceiling was supported by oaken rafters of great bulk. The huge mantelpiece of carved oak exhibited the armorial bearings of the Egmonts, quartered with those of the house of Bavaria, repeated on the large iron plate at the back of the fireplace, the fire-dogs of which, ornamented with fantastic heads, protruded far into the room.

Near to the Lady Isabel and her mother, Sabina, Duchess of Bavaria, with his arms folded on his broad chest, stood the celebrated Prince of Gavres, popularly called Count of Egmont, at that time a star of the first magnitude, before whose light that of France had so often paled. He was of a fair, florid complexion; his expanded brow looked the seat of honour; his mild blue eyes were full of gentleness; and his full lips expressed the blandest courtesy. His air was that of command; a frank, easy grace was shown in every movement. No person ever united in a more perfect manner the prince, the knight, and the soldier.

Either from the love of contrast, so deeply implanted in human nature, or because she was the eldest of his daughters, the count regarded Isabel as his favourite child. He felt for her the strongest affection of which the heart of man is susceptible. Not his sons, who might bear his banner to the battle-field, continue the name he had endowed with so much lustre, and, like him, trumpet it forth to the annals of history—not even Philip, his first-born—was half so dear to his heart as that one little shrinking floweret, whose fragility made it doubtful if it could bloom long in a world where there are so many cold winters to blight, so many scorching summers to wither. He regarded her with attention; and Isabel, happy in the notice of a parent whom she loved with all the enthusiasm of her nature, remained motionless, with the long, snowy fingers of her mother clasped within her own, fearing lest, by movement, word, or look, she might disturb his gaze, thus fixed upon her.

"I rejoice to find ourselves once more at Purmerend," said the countess to her husband. "So far from the business and the cares of public life, I feel completely at home. Here, at least, we have you to ourselves. At Gavres, the affairs of Ghent tear you constantly from our side. How much happier should we be if, retired altogether from the state, forgetting and forgotten, you could at last enjoy the pleasures, the leisure—and, let me add, the security—of your home."

"Idle visions these, Sabina," replied the count, "such as women love to indulge in. Forgotten I never shall be, or my country will be stained with ingratitude; forget, I never can! I am, moreover, looked upon by all classes, in these critical times, as one of their chief stays in the storm. I have duties to fulfil—duties from which I never could, nor would, shrink, let them cost me what they may."

"Alas! I fear the cost will be great. Already have you been far more involved in these matters than is favourable to our repose."

"Repose is not a word for a man, Sabina. You would not wish your husband to entwine his brows with a wreath of poppy."

"Your laurels are yet too fresh to need replacing," said the countess, proudly.

"Perhaps a few olive-branches interspersed amongst their leaves would not have disparaged them," said the count, thoughtfully. "That would have been the proudest hour of my life, in which I could have stood between my sovereign and my countrymen a successful mediator, obtaining justice as a boon from the former, and offering in return from the

latter the assurance of infinite gratitude and unalterable fidelity. Such, Sabina, is the dream my fancy has long revelled in, and from which I have been but too roughly awakened."

"It was indeed worthy of you, had but success been possible! I would fain hope that both the king and your countrymen—cruelly as the former has deceived you—must honour the disinterested feelings that have guided you to seek the good of both. But, alas! people, as well as princes, have often proved ungrateful, and in that, at least, have shown sympathy. The task of mediator has ever been a difficult—sometimes a dangerous one. He risks offending the one party, frequently, without satisfying the other."

"But the satisfaction of one's own conscience—do you reckon that as nothing, Sabina? Mine to me is, and, I trust, ever will be, the highest of earthly tribunals."

"Excuse my frankness," said the countess, gently. "Remember how slowly, how sorrowfully, the year you were in Spain glided by with those you left behind. Little Isabel pined and drooped, as if she never were to see you more."

The count sighed, and remained for some minutes absorbed in thought. Apparently, his daughter was the object of his reflections; for he passed his hand over her fair hair, and affectionately kissed her forehead.

"I had encouraged hopes for you, too, my child," he said. "But promises! what are they? The word of a king is very air; it fans our cheek, passes by, and is lost in the atmosphere of a court! Even so be it; my Isabel and I can do without royal favours."

"Still something, nay, much, was done for us," said the countess; "and with some management the hopes held out to you may, perhaps, yet be realised."

"Yes, at the price of my honour!" exclaimed Egmont, impatiently. "I was grateful for those private favours you mention—how grateful, you best know, Sabina—when I fancied that Philip was as much my country's benefactor as my own. The world calls me rich; but what riches are adequate to support with due splendour a name like ours, that has so many claims upon it. God knows, I grudge not Heaven any child of mine whom a true vocation may call to embrace the veil; still, I confess, I should not like to see any one of them compelled to that measure, and the promises of Philip were not unimportant in that respect. But all that is now over," added he, with a sigh. "The prince who did not scruple to expose my fair fame to foul suspicions—who could persuade me that I had succeeded in obtaining from him all I demanded for a distressed people—give me letters of a satisfactory nature, which he took care to neutralise by private, and very different instructions, and thus expose me to the doubts of all parties—can I trust him in aught—him who could thus deceive one to whom the world thinks him indebted? It was not fair—it was not knightly!"

"I wish," said the countess, "you would resent this conduct by silent contempt, instead of open discontent. The latter merely tends to embitter the many joys that fate has bestowed on you, and may, ultimately, cause the king to regard you as an enemy. All hearts are not generous enough to understand that fidelity may be still strong in a bosom whence love and respect are flown. Oh! my dear, dear husband, how I wish to see you renounce the part you have embraced, and retire into the bosom

of your family, where, I repeat, you will find safety as well as happiness!"

"It is worse than useless, dearest, to speak thus to me," said the count, taking his wife's disengaged hand. "You are conjuring up sweet images of peace that may not be. They would not let me retire thus to tranquil oblivion, and, although in hours of disappointment I have myself thought of it, I could, I think, have courage for anything but that. Think not, Sabina, that it is because I feel less warmly than yourself the pleasures—the inexhaustible delights of a home like mine, where bright hopes and brighter smiles meet me at every turn. Not even at Spires, in the halo of your youth and beauty, when an emperor put your hand in mine, were you half so dear to my heart as now, my Sabina—now that you have added thirteen golden links to the chain that bound us. Indeed I am a happy husband—a glad father; and to watch my children's growing merits—to listen to my Sabina's gentle counsel—to watch over the comforts and prosperity of my vassals (for though my power of inflicting pain on them be limited by the wise laws of this country, still my bounty is not fettered), to enjoy their grateful obedience and their love—to see my halls filled with the friends and allies of my house, and to pass the wine-cup round in oblivion of the discord and the evils that make the world, at times, so sad—to break a lance in the tilt-yard, or pursue the fleet stag through the green forest with the fleeter hounds—to see my gentle daughters wed noble and aspiring youths, my sons gather laurels in their turn wherewith to crown the shield of their house and quarter it with high alliances,—these are visions that have often haunted my day-dreams, and made me smile away many a graver, sadder image. Such the life I could have wished to live. My death I would meet with delight in the hour of victory; a soldier's grave is the soldier's best recompense: not for him the soft cushions of a silken bed, and the wails of female sorrow; let his last couch be the trampled turf, and the shouts of triumph his death-knell! But if that may not be, as it seems now but little likely that it should, then would I pass from this world like my cousin of Buren,* with a smile on my lip, surrounded by loving friends and numerous kinsmen, having time to express the kind wishes of my heart to each and all. His was a calm, serene death—such as it well beseems a man to die. Shall my end be like his?"

A pensive, almost sad expression banished from the count's handsome countenance the glow and animation which his words had excited, as if some painful train of thought had been suggested by them. The warm pressure of Sabina's fingers, and the soft lips of Isabel, that touched his other hand, aroused him. He gazed in their tearful eyes, and

* The death of the Count of Buren is quite a feature of the middle ages. When he felt his last hour approaching, he armed himself, *cap-à-pie*, and throwing over all the gorgeous mantle of the Golden Fleece, caused himself to be carried to his grand hall of reception, whither he had summoned most of his powerful kin, as well as all the officers of his household and retainers, down to the huntsmen and falconers. Having taken his seat, he called for a large goblet of wine, and quaffed it to the health of all. He then conversed freely, indulging in reminiscences of the chase and war, until, feeling himself growing weak, he blessed the emperor, took leave of each in turn, even of his servants, and, falling back in his chair, expired. "Thus," says Brantôme, "should all great men meet their end, instead of dying in feathers, like ducks." This death made a great sensation at the time, and to "die like Buren" became a common saying.

shaking off, with an evident start, the despondency that crept over him, he continued, with a somewhat forced smile—

"But talking of such matters will not make the few hours pass lightly which we have snatched from the world? Where are your brothers, Isabel? They both accompanied you back, did they not?"

"Yes," replied Isabel. "Philip was delighted with the princess's affability; and, in truth, she was full of kindness for us all. To me she spoke at great length of the advantages of a religious life, and plainly hinted that, should I wish to enter a convent, I need not be anxious about a dowry, for the king would provide one fitting my birth."

"And a great deal more to the same purpose, I dare be sworn," interrupted the count, angrily. "I wish she would spare me such marks of her favour as her endeavours to rob me of my eldest daughter. Come, Isabel, you must not think of this; I have very different views for you. You are not the child," he continued, with a smile, "that I could so easily spare. I owe the duchess no thanks for this. But your mind must remain unbiassed for the present; in time, I will stamp upon it the impress I wish it to bear—always with your leave and consent, fair daughter; for God knows I would not enact the tyrant with any human being, least of all with my own children."

"I am glad," said the countess, "that you are so explicit with Isabel. She has taken strange notions into her head of late, and thinks more of the cloister than we could wish. She does not reflect that her parents may have happier plans in store for her."

"My little Isabel," said Egmont, coaxingly, "has more regard for our wishes than you imagine, Sabina. These longings after repose and seclusion are often, in a young breast, mistaken impulses of a very different nature. Isabel loves me too well ever to have thought seriously of leaving me."

The count spoke in the most soothing of tones, yet the deepest blushes rapidly succeeded each other on the young girl's cheek; her frame was agitated by a slight tremor, and two silent tears escaped from beneath her long, silken lashes. In any other, these symptoms would have appeared strange; but the parents of Isabel had long observed, and watched with painful anxiety, the extreme timidity and nervousness of their favourite child. Unlike the rest of their offspring, she had never possessed the vigour of frame and buoyancy of disposition which had fallen to their lot, and no after-cares had been successful in giving body or mind more tone. The calm, unruffled existence which her rank secured for her had not blunted or spared, as might have been hoped, but rather increased, to a painful excess, the young maiden's acute sensibilities. Her family had at first struggled with, but now respected, the weakness of her physical organisation. Involuntarily, her father's voice became more gentle when addressing her, her mother's look softer, and her infant sisters forebore their loud gambols in her presence. A natural instinct banished all rude and boisterous mirth from around her. On the present occasion, therefore, her apparently causeless agitation was neither canvassed nor reproved; and the entrance of two lovely cherubs, ushered in with great ceremony, by the countess's page, diverted attention from her.

They rushed to the count for the accustomed embrace, who, raising from the floor each little damsel in turn, bestowed upon her the parental kiss with a look of glowing fondness. The eyes of the children were in-

stantly attracted by the gay colour of the silken band to which the insignia of the Golden Fleece was appended, and they struggled with their tiny hands for the prize as they lay in their father's arms.

"You are too ambitious, fair damsels," said he, laughing; "but though we are spared the weight of the collar on ordinary days, yet the trinket is heavy enough at times in all conscience, without your adding your little load to it. It is remarkable how all my girls in turn have striven to pull this honourable badge from my neck. Little Isabel was never so happy as when I suffered her to play with it."

"You spoil the children," said the countess, with a smile of happiness. "See how they toy with your ruff. They will tear the pearls from your doublet, if you do not put them down. Leonora is particularly mischievous."

"When one has not yet completed the second year of existence," said the count, laughing at his crowing babes, "one cannot be expected to be discreet or reasonable; but, in good sooth, they are troublesome little blessings. Here, Sabina, take them."

The mother received her treasures in her lap, where the youngest seemed to rest in perfect content, but the elder glided to the floor, and was soon playing with Isabel, the general favourite of the family, whether old or young.

"We must plan something to amuse," began the count; but the sentence died away upon his lips as the door opened, and a personage glided into the apartment, whom we cannot pass under silence.

The Count of Egmont, like all the other members of the privy council, had a confidential secretary, who was privileged to accompany his patron to the council-chamber, and who, like all the chief officers of powerful houses, was of good birth. Far from being obliged from pecuniary motives to take upon himself the duties of such an office, John of Casembrot, Lord of Backerseel, was not, as his title sufficiently denotes, without landed property; but, sharing in no ordinary degree the enthusiastic love and admiration of the Flemings for the count, he felt honoured in filling a situation of so much trust about his person. He had been with him so many years that Egmont had no secrets for him; his very thoughts, his most important plans, were laid open to him as soon as formed—in short, he had become his friend.

Casembrot was evidently past thirty, of a grave appearance, but otherwise so little distinguished by any remarkable trait or characteristic, that he might have been seen day after day without being noticed, or, on a sudden, called to remembrance at all; but the scrutiny of an interested observer would have discovered that his tall form was prematurely bent, and that his thin, prominent features bore an expression of habitual melancholy, which could not have been always familiar to them. His complexion, hair, and eyes, were dark, like those of a Spaniard; but there was a mildness pervading his every look, that at once showed he belonged not to that land, whose sun but too often ripens unto fierceness the passions of man.

Casembrot looked round for a moment with an air of uncertainty. When his eye encountered that of the count, he said—

"I am sorry to have to derange you from the enjoyment of this tranquil hour, but news of a pressing nature has arrived, which, I am afraid, will demand your instant attention."

"It is always you, Casembrot, who take my lord from us," said the countess, reproachfully.

"Not me, lady," replied the secretary, "not me; but the government of Flanders has many claims upon his time which he cannot escape."

"But to-day," said Egmont, looking around him with looks of tenderness and satisfaction, "to-day, I feel quite the father, and would fain forget that I am aught else—that is, if you will let me;" and he placed his hand familiarly on his secretary's shoulder.

Casembrot met the glance of the count with a look of so grave a meaning, that the latter instantly relinquished his hold.

"I see how it is," said he, "you will take no excuse, and are again come to pour into my ear all the bad news that has been collecting during my short absence."

"But you will come back to us," said the countess, gazing on her husband with a look of deep affection.

"Certainly; I will give him an hour at the utmost; and then, if no envious chance tears any of us away from the domestic circle, we will have one fortnight free from all interruption."

"I fear you will think it advisable, on the contrary, to hurry back, with all speed, to Brussels," said Casembrot.

"In that case, you have truly some unpleasant tidings for me," said the count, assuming an air of seriousness he had not yet exhibited. "Then, dearest, you must partake of the delights of Purmerend without me."

As Egmont was about to leave the apartment, the galloping of a horse was heard approaching the gates of the castle.

"Ha!" exclaimed Casembrot, who had listened attentively, "doubtless the regent's messenger comes to summon you in all haste to the council."

"Indeed! blows the wind from that quarter?" answered the count, negligently. "Then, for once, I intend to disappoint *Madame de Parme*. Of what use are we Knights of the Golden Fleece and Governors of Provinces in the council, when the princess has previously settled in her own cabinet, with Barlaimont and Viglius, the measures which she is determined to take. Once it was Granvella, now it is them. There is always some one between her and those whose voices should be most listened to. Wherefore should I go to offer advice that will, I am sure, be rejected, because unpalatable? and why should I not refuse to act upon principles which my common-sense, and my heart, alike disown? Come, my trusty friend, for once believe me; though I know you are, in most cases, unpersuadable when once you have adopted an idea. I feel that in attending this summons I can do no good to others, perhaps none to myself. I have something of a presentiment about it. I will not go."

"But bethink you, my lord," urged the secretary. "Not only the princess, but also the Knights of the Order, will, perhaps, put the most unfavourable construction on your absence at such a crisis. Had I but time to explain ——"

"You, doubtless, would persuade me, in your own quiet way, as usual, that I am wrong and you are right. But this time I will be firm. The countess and Lady Isabel shall not be disappointed. Besides, I have a misgiving—a secret voice tells me to stay away."

At this moment the messenger was formally announced, and Casembrot hastened to receive him in the hall below.

"Nay, trust not, implicitly, to omens and forebodings," said the countess. "Remember how you imagined evils were impending, in consequence of some trivial circumstances that occurred at the memorable *fêtes* at Antwerp, many years ago; yet nothing happened that was not most agreeable."

"True," replied the count; "I remember it well. The king overthrew De Horn and myself in the tournament, and we both imagined it boded us no good. I tormented myself with apprehensions on your account, and yet that very day I learnt the glad tidings of my Isabel's birth."

"And the ring—the talisman of your house, whose loss so much distressed you, but which was eventually returned. Omens are not to be trusted, they so often prove false. It is the weakness of our nature, only, that prompts us to listen to the busy suggestions of our fancy."

"It were dangerous, at least, not to struggle with them at times," said Casembrot, who at that moment glided into the room. "This is a truth that all must have experienced who have passed the first days of youth."

"For once, however, I am determined to yield to them," persisted the count. "What have you heard more? Alas! the frail bark of the state is sadly tossed about, when a female hand is at the rudder."

"Let us be fair," answered Casembrot. "Few men could steer it clearer of the rocks than does the Princess Margaret. If she were but free to act according to the impulses of her own firm mind, and clear head, it were well for the Netherlands."

"If you think so highly of her powers," said the count, "you will agree the more readily with me, that she stands not in much need of my support."

"The messenger has informed me," observed the secretary, "that others have been sent to every quarter of Flanders, to summon the knights and governors to Brussels in all haste. I also gathered from him that his instructions were to hasten here, before going to the Prince of Orange. It were, perhaps, well for you, my lord, to ride as far as Breda, and consult with him. As we proceed thither I can lay the urgency of the case before you; and I feel certain, too, that the prince will advise a speedy compliance with the regent's wishes. I hope no knight, under the present circumstances, will, I am sure none should, refuse obedience. Believe me, my dear lord, your departure is unavoidable."

"You see, ladies, I cannot escape my fate, let me struggle never so much," said the count, laughing; "so farewell, farewell! Casembrot, I am yours."

As Egmont, followed by his secretary, left the apartment, again the sound of a horse was heard entering the court-yard.

"Lamoral!" exclaimed Isabel, her eye flashing with a momentary pleasure as the door flew open, and Arkel stood in the presence of the ladies of the castle.

PORT PHILLIP.

BY FREDERICK POWLETT, ESQ.

WHILE the subject of emigration is being so prominently brought before the public, it may not be amiss to draw especial attention to that one of the Australian colonies which, while it seems to be free from most of the drawbacks urged against the fifth division of the globe, combines within itself nearly all its peculiar advantages. We allude to Australia Felix, commonly known by the name first given to the harbour—Port Phillip. This is certainly one of the most extraordinary colonies of this or any former age. Discovered—or, at any rate, explored and settled—by voluntary private enterprise, it has never cost the mother country one farthing. On the contrary, having from the commencement a large (considering the population) surplus revenue, it contributed to the resources of New South Wales, or Sydney, of which (much against its will) it still forms a part—an evil from which Port Phillip seems about to be freed, by being made a distinct colony, with its own governor and legislature, which is likely to be chiefly elective. Scarcely more than ten years ago this colony was located by some enterprising settlers from Van Diemen's Land, who brought their flocks with them, at great risk and expense. This was followed shortly after by the arrival of flocks and herds of cattle from the northern district; and now the whole country between Melbourne and Yap is occupied, and a mail runs twice a-week from Melbourne to Sydney, a distance of about six hundred miles. In 1837, the first time we saw the now handsome city of Melbourne, the capital, the first brick house was unfinished; there were, perhaps, three hundred people living in tents, slab or weather-board cottages, or mud edifices, commonly called wattle and daub. After dark, the only guide to the residence of an acquaintance was the bearing of the lights in the different houses, and the position of the one sought being ascertained, ten chances to one against your arriving without falling into some pit lately dug for the cellar of a house about to be erected, or your shins being broken by stumps of trees, which were by no means scarce in what were called the streets of that young settlement.

This town has now about twelve thousand inhabitants, and many of its buildings would vie with the best in many towns of similar size in England. The population of the whole district may be estimated at forty thousand, as the last census, taken in 1845, was about thirty-six thousand. With respect to the character of the population, we feel warranted in saying that it is equal, if not superior, in point of education and intelligence, to any colony under the British crown. We refer especially to the settlers in the interior. Its wealth is best proved by the amount of its exports and imports; the former amounting to nearly 500,000*l.*, and the latter to about 250,000*l.*!

Its freedom from the severe droughts which the more northern settlements are occasionally subject to, and its general temperature, make it peculiarly adapted to the constitution of those born in our own isles; and even those who are delicate, and have a tendency to pulmonary disease, derive benefit from its genial atmosphere.

It possesses, perhaps, a larger portion of soil adapted to agriculture than

any other part of the continent of New South Wales, while for grazing purposes it is perhaps unrivalled. In the luxuriant districts of Port Fairy and Portland Bay it is not unusual for a settler to send to market a draft of fat cattle, say 100, from his run, grass-fed (no oil-cake or beet-root), averaging 900 and even 1000 lbs. in weight; and these splendid beasts are often melted into tallow, owing to a want of sufficient mouths to consume the beef, even at 1¼*d.* per lb.

While the most serious complaints are urged against Australia as to its want of water, Port Phillip seems to have engrossed more than its share of the rivers on the south-eastern and southern coast; Giff's Land, on the south-east coast alone, has seven streams, including the fine River La Trobe (named by Count Strabysky after the superintendent of the district), constantly running through one of the finest tracts of country in the world; and Port Phillip Proper possesses the great River Murray, more than 800 miles in length, the Goulburn, Yarra Yarra, Wamby, Mowabutt, Lee, Wannow, Wimmern, Glenelg, Broken River, Ovens, Camparpe, Loddon, and many others, too numerous to mention; besides water-holes, chiefly from drainage, on many of the large plains in the interior, that render large tracts of country available which would otherwise be useless.

Port Phillip possesses another advantage, which to many will appear a primary one, in its freedom from the convict taint; for though it forms part of the territory under the governor of New South Wales, convicts have never been sent to this highly-favoured district; and so few have been brought over from Sydney, that they are lost as a class among the numerous free immigrants from the mother country. To such as dread the contaminating influence of a convict atmosphere, whether on account of themselves, or, if married there, or intending to become so, their children, Port Phillip presents a society perhaps as pure as that to which they are surrounded in this country.

The aborigines may number about 5000; and though no great success has attended the attempts made to civilise them, they can scarcely be said to be any hindrance, or interfere with any settler who acts with common prudence and in a judicious manner towards them. The aboriginal protectors have certainly been of much use in preventing collisions; and the native police, amounting to about eighty men, are in a good state of discipline, and very useful in assisting the other police in arresting the violators of the law; and, if necessary, are only too ready to be employed against those of their own race.

One late benefit that Port Phillip has received, should add no small weight with many who may be thinking of giving up the hard struggle in this crowded country, and seeking their fortunes in a distant land, equally formed by the Almighty, though still, with few exceptions, in a state of nature, and that is the recent appointment of a bishop, eminent for piety, learning, and benevolence. With such a man at the head of the English Church, who has given up the comforts of this highly civilised kingdom, and gone out with no other motive than to preach the Gospel of Christ and to be of use to his fellow-creatures in a far country, we think it promises well for the religious and moral well-being of the community placed under his spiritual guidance.

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

By Madame Paalzow.

Chapter XIX.

This produced a spontaneous effect. Van der Néess started back, and shuddered, as if he had been shot, ran towards the chair from which he had risen, sank down upon it utterly exhausted, and bathed in perspiration, and then looked up fearfully from beneath his bushy eyebrows. For the moment he seemed scarcely able to collect his senses, but soon recognised Mynherr van Marseeven and the sheriff, who stood before him with a threatening aspect.

"I hope you are conscious that you have behaved like a fool," said the sheriff, "and like an unmannerly clown; that you have been guilty of an unpardonable breach of respect towards the high and noble person of the chief burgomaster, and deserve to be turned out of doors by the constable, if we had but one here, since you have proved yourself utterly unworthy of the condescension and kindness his mightiness has shown in crossing the threshold of such a maniac."

"Indeed, your worship," said he, "I confess I was wrong; but surely his mightiness will be merciful, and forgive a poor man for forgetting himself in his grief, but——"

"Silence!" thundered Hooft. "You had no grief, but you received undeserved honours. You have behaved like a madman. But now, without any further palaver, declare to us whether, as the father of this young girl who is to be elevated to the rank of countess, you have any objections to make to the Countess Fawcett's project. If you have not, sign and seal this document, that we may have done with you."

"I have no earthly objection to the matter of her being made a countess, or bearing a noble name," said Néess. "But, Mynherr Hooft, you must be sensible that a man cannot sign a document without knowing what it contains. Now, consider"—(here his courage seemed to rise)—"for anything I know it may impose some weighty obligation on me. What would have become of me if I had not learnt to guard against such——"

"Silence!" ejaculated Hooft once more, for he was determined to keep Van der Néess in salutary fear. "Silence, I say! There, take the document, read it, and then do what you like, for it is stated therein that your consent is freely and voluntarily given."

"You may say that, when you've got it," muttered Van der Néess between his teeth, as he proceeded to read the document.

The two gentlemen approached a window, and exchanged some whispered remarks concerning this strange scene. They scarcely knew how they felt, for, with all their anger, they could hardly resist bursting into a fit of laughter, but they agreed they had never before met with so despicable a specimen of human nature as Van der Néess.

The latter had, in the meanwhile, perused the document, and, when he found it contained no demands on his gold, he set about reading it over a

second time, to make sure he was not mistaken. When he found the contents to be the same, he grew thoughtful, and his suspicions became more firmly rooted, for he imagined there must be some hidden meaning, which he could not discover, or that this paper must entail dangerous consequences; so that, by signing what seemed a harmless document, he would in some way or other commit himself, and afterwards discover that, as he had said A, he must say B.

"Well," said Hooft, who had entreated Mynherr van Marseeven not to address this rude fellow again; "well, have you done now? I should have thought that, after reading over that paper twice, you might know its contents."

Van der Néess started in alarm. Much disturbed at having found nothing to confirm his suspicions, he said, in a dejected tone, as the parchment dropped from his hands, "I can discover nothing."

"Except undeserved kindness," said Hooft, scarcely able to suppress a smile, as he perceived how Van der Néess had unconsciously betrayed himself. "Therefore do not detain us any longer."

"You are very hasty, Mynherr Sheriff," said Van der Néess, in evident anxiety; "you give me no time to reflect."

"Nor is there any occasion for that," cried Hooft. "All that is required of you is, that you do not object to your daughter's change of name and elevation to rank."

"By no means," returned Néess; "I have not a word to say. And if you will assure me, upon your honour as a sheriff, that nothing more is required of me but to give my consent to that, I will sign the paper at once."

Hooft stamped on the ground with impatience, but a conciliatory sign from Mynherr van Marseeven induced him to yield.

"Well, then, in Heaven's name!——" cried he, angrily.

"Upon my honour, as a sheriff, nothing more is required of you!"

Van der Néess signed the document, but muttered to himself, "So this proud aunt wants nothing of me—the haughty baggage! I suppose she will go borrowing and begging all over the world before she comes to me!" He was much disappointed at losing his expected triumph, and the satisfaction of refusing her request in a rude and insulting manner, as well as provoked at having missed the opportunity of surprising Angela by his just conclusions.

When he had signed his name, Hooft took the paper in his hand, and said in a tone between anger and mockery—

"Now your daughter is a countess: that is to say, provided her mother also consents to sign, for it is only then you will receive the emperor's letters patent, empowering your daughter to bear the arms and name."

"Oh! I'm sure of my wife," said Néess, his heart swelling with joy. "This will, indeed, be a surprise for her; she little thinks of her daughter's coming to such honour; she will find out now that a merchant of Amsterdam is no hindrance to high honours, and that it is worth something for a girl to be his daughter! Will you allow me to run to her? She is in the court with her lady aunt. I am anxious to know how she will look when she hears she has given birth to a countess!"

"Save yourself the trouble," said Hooft. "We shall presently repair thither together and the countess, her aunt, will by this time have acquainted her with the whole affair."

"The devil take her!" cried Van der Néess, fiercely; "she is always in the way, and bent upon spoiling all my sport! Well, be that as it may, I shall yet read upon my wife's face the impression this news has made upon her."

Cornelius Hooft was obliged to push him back, in order to allow the burgomaster to pass out first; and the party entered the court of pleasure.

The agitating scene which had taken place here, in consequence of the very different light in which the affair was viewed by Angela, had given place to a peaceful calm; and the two noble-minded relatives were engaged in a serious and affectionate conversation on subjects of the most exalted and interesting nature.

Angela gravely and respectfully saluted the burgomaster and his companion; and Urica shuddered as she felt she could no longer avoid noticing Van der Néess.

A glance sufficed to convince her that he was, if possible, more repulsive in his appearance than ever; for after a scene, such as we have just described, the traces of passion were ever written on his countenance, which was also distorted by convulsive twitches.

Meantime, all his boasted assurance had vanished when he found himself in Urica's presence, who had not lost anything either in beauty or in dignity since he had last seen her.

At length, turning round towards him, she said, in as friendly a tone as she could command, though she visibly changed colour—

"Good evening, Mynherr Néess; come nearer, if you please, for we have an important affair to discuss—probably you have already been informed of it by my cousin, Mynherr van Marseeven?"

"Not a bit of it!" cried Van der Néess, as he dragged his feet along the ground in drawing near. "It is all settled; there is nothing to consult about, noble aunt; the little countess is at your service, and trust me to give her something solid to balance the title." He accompanied these words with a repulsive grin; and when Urica, unable to conquer her disgust, turned away, his eye wandered to Angela. When he saw the serious expression of her pale features, he imagined she must, as yet, be ignorant of the good fortune that had befallen her daughter, and nudging Urica, who started back in alarm, he said, in a confidential tone, "I suppose she knows nothing as yet?"

"She knows all!" said Urica, drawing back.

Van der Néess hereupon imagined Angela did not comprehend the matter, and deemed it incumbent on him to explain it to her in a manner suited to her understanding; therefore, pushing himself past the rest of the party, he caught hold of her arm, and said, in an altered tone of voice—

"I suppose you did not understand what your noble aunt told you, about the new little countess; or that you are mother to a countess? Do you hear me—our dear little Floris is a countess—do you understand? She is really and truly a countess—as certainly a countess as ever your aunt was."

"Oh, Néess," faltered Angela, looking up, sadly. "Our own little Floris! Is it possible you could consent to that?"

"You little simpleton!" said Van der Néess, attempting to play the indulgent husband; "you cannot yet conceive the extent of your good

luck, that is the reason you ask such questions! Just think! you are really mother to a countess. Eh! is not that something to please your pride? Ah! I know you are only pretending; I warrant your little heart is fluttering all the while? Well, well, you must not expect too much from her," said Van der Néess, turning confidentially towards Hooft. "She is not naturally gifted with so much penetration as to be able to understand all these things—it is no fault of hers; and, after all, what do women want of so much judgment? It is our department to think and judge of what should be done, and at the end they always see that we are right, and rejoice that we have settled the point for them. Look here, my little Angela, all you have to do is to put your name to a paper which Mynherr Hooft will place before you—close under my name which I have already affixed to it."

Angela turned from him without replying, and, folding her hands, sadly, she said—

"May God be merciful to me, and support me!"

"Let us sit down," said the chief burgomaster, taking a seat beside Urica, and motioning the sheriff to a seat near Angela.

"My noble cousin," said the Countess Fawcett, turning to the chief burgomaster, "my niece has refused her consent to the elevation of her daughter to the rank of countess, and the reasons she has assigned for her refusal are so just and noble, that my opposition has been silenced."

"How!" cried Van der Néess, starting up. "Have you refused your consent when I have signed?"

"Néess," said the burgomaster, in an authoritative tone, "I desire you will be silent till you are spoken to, and offer no interruption to anything your wife may say or we reply, otherwise we all shall instantly leave your house, and hold our consultation elsewhere."

This tone, as usual, made Van der Néess tremble, but he sought to disguise his fears beneath an air of stubborn indifference.

"Well." cried he, settling himself in his chair, "I can easily be silent, if that's all; but you won't do much with her, I'll tell you that, for she can't understand such things without me. But I shall be silent. Ho! ho! that won't cost me much."

When silence was at length fairly established, Angela began to explain her reasons; at first she spoke timidly, and her voice faltered, but she gained courage as she went on, and repeated nearly all she had said to Urica, though she attempted to soften it down out of consideration for Van der Néess. During this speech, the latter, though debarred from speaking, could not forbear expressing his feelings in dumb show: he beat the devil's tattoo, rocked himself backwards and forwards in his chair, shrugged his shoulders, looked from one to the other with a savage grin, clenched his fist, and shot forth fiery glances.

Both the chief burgomaster and Mynherr Cornelius Hooft were much affected and surprised by what they heard, for though they had always felt interest and pity for Angela, they had listened somewhat incredulously to Madame Marseeven's account of the development of her mind, and attributed the favourable opinion she expressed of Angela to the well-known kindness of her gentle nature; for men often hesitate longer than they ought to believe in the mental cultivation of a woman who has no other instructor than her own pious heart.

When they had heard Angela's arguments, they were inclined to think

she had taken a more correct and unbiassed view of human life than they themselves. Cornelius Hooft, that devoted admirer of the female sex, listened to her words with eyes glistening with emotion, and even Van Marseeven could not suppress an approving nod.

Encouraged by these signs of approbation Angela proceeded as follows: "I have been informed by my noble-minded aunt, whose kind intentions towards my child I truly appreciate, that a decree passed in such high places as the States-General and the Imperial Court is irrevocable, and my maternal interference can merely prevent the consequences; therefore, my dear friends, and you, my beloved aunt, I entreat you to take charge of this important document, and keep it for my little Floris. I will sign it, as my husband has already done, that it may be perfectly valid. But it is my wish that the matter may rest there, and nothing be suffered to transpire, either in the city or in the house, or in particular to my little Floris herself; and I pray you, of your kindness, to assist me in effecting this. One or other of us, I trust, will live," said she, in a faltering voice, "to see this dear child grow up and arrive at years of discretion, if it so please Heaven. And *that* one will keep an eye of interest on the course of her life, and observe what fate He who rules over the destinies of us all has assigned to her; then let that person judge whether the possession of this document will be of advantage to her; and if so, let her be informed of her mother's reasons for keeping her in ignorance of it, and preventing her from adopting the rank to which it entitles her."

This solemn and touching address of Angela's made a deep impression on her hearers, but suddenly they shuddered involuntarily, for Van der Néess, who had been ready to burst with anger during this speech, broke out into a loud savage laugh, the sure precursor of an access of rage, and bending forwards he cried, "There, your worships, now you have it! Did I not tell you, you would hear nothing but nonsense? I know her of old! but none of you would believe me. What is the use of listening to such a farrago of nonsense. I should have brought her to reason in two words; and all this trash would not have sunk so deep into her head. Sign, fool! I command you! and leave the rest to those who understand such matters."

But Angela proved on this occasion that she was not wholly destitute of influence when she deemed it worth her while to exert it. With sudden energy she seized hold of Van der Néess' arm, who trembled as she said, in a stern voice, "Néess, I desire you will comply with all that I, these worthy gentlemen and my aunt, shall decide. Behave yourself quietly, or I shall prove to you, that I have rights as holy and well founded as yours, and that it is not from ignorance I leave my fortune in your hands. Promise, I say, to agree to whatever we shall settle, before we leave this place."

"Well, well," cried Van der Néess, "you need not waste so much eloquence on the subject. Can you name a single instance of my having forced you to do anything you did not like? You are a foolish little thing, Angela; but you know you always have your own way at last. We poor husbands have no chance," he added, grinning at this stale joke, and winking confidentially at the gentlemen.

Angela hereupon released his arm, and, turning with an air of eager expectation towards her friends, said timidly, "Will it please you to give me your opinion."

Urica wept in silence; everything she saw and heard increased her love and respect for her niece. Van Marseeven shared her feelings. "All you have said is so clear and plausible," he replied, "that it would be impossible to hear you without being convinced of the justice of your arguments. Besides, you have so clearly pointed out the proper course to be pursued in the future, with regard to this affair, in which we have all proved ourselves somewhat too hasty, that I am sure there can be but one opinion amongst us—namely, '*that you see the matter in the true light, and that you have decided aright.*'"

At the same moment Urica pressed Angela to her bosom, and cried, through her tears, "Oh, forgive me, Angela! forgive me, for being so hasty in following the dictates of my ambitious heart; henceforward I will look up to you for counsel; I will learn true wisdom from you, and you shall teach me to take a purer and higher view of life."

"Aha," exclaimed Néess, in a tone of satisfaction, for he felt indefinitely flattered at the respect that was shown to his wife. But the latter, with grave gentleness, disclaimed all praise, and seemed half ashamed of the enthusiastic admiration expressed by Cornelius Hooft, who, bending low, kissed her hand with the most devoted respect.

At length the party had sufficiently recovered from their emotion to return to the document. Mynherr van Marseeven sat down beneath the old lime-tree and added, as a codicil, these words:—

"We, the undersigned, take God to witness, that we will keep this document, which invests Floris van der Néess with the rank of countess, an inviolable secret from the said Floris, till she shall have attained her majority, or till any important event shall take place in her life, when, by general consent, the knowledge of her rank may be deemed serviceable to her."

This clause was signed by all the party, including Van der Néess, who, after some muttered objections, yielded to Angela's serious remonstrances.

"But," said he, angrily, throwing away his pen, "what's to be done about the will now? Is that all moonshine?"

"Set your mind at rest about the will, Van der Néess," said the burgomaster; "it remains in full force."

The door leading to the hall had been locked during this important consultation, in order to provide against any interruption; but, for some little time, sounds of plaintive weeping had been heard to issue from thence, occasionally interrupted by the tones of Caas' fiddle. However, the music seemed to prove ineffectual in soothing this distress, as it gradually ceased altogether, while the sobs became more audible every moment. Van der Neess, Angela, and Urica, who in this single instance were perfectly of one mind, had long felt for the grief of poor Floris at being banished from their presence, and their first impulse was to set her at liberty.

"Really," cried Urica, "we require something to refresh our wearied spirits; let us open the door and call in our lovely little Floris."

"Oh, yes!" cried Néess, in a transport of delight. "Our lady aunt is quite right—that was well thought of. Thank you, thank you, noble aunt!" and he rushed towards the door, and flung it open: in another minute, Floris darted out of the dark hall into the dusky court, like a ray of sunshine.

She looked uncommonly lovely: the tears were yet trembling, like dew-drops, on her angelic countenance, while her eyes sparkled with joy at being released from her confinement, and a sweet smile displayed her pearly teeth.

She looked around for a moment, then threw herself into Urica's outstretched arms.

"My sweet angel! my darling Floris!" cried the countess, as she caressed the child in the most affectionate manner.

"Oh, go! you are just as naughty as the rest," said the child, assuming a pretty little pouting air. "It was very unkind to keep me shut up so long. Why did you not tell them to let me come to you before? or was it that they would not do as you wished."

"No," replied Urica, affected by the question; "nobody would do as I wished; but they were all in the right, and your Urica was the only one in the wrong."

"Oh, no! don't believe that," cried Floris, clasping her arms round Urica's neck, and loading her with kisses. "You are always in the right; and I will only do what you wish. All you tell me to do is so pleasant, and so easy, and so amusing. Do, dear mamma, pray," said she, turning to Angela, "let me do what Aunt Urica wishes. I always like that better than anything else."

Angela gently took the little hand Floris held out to her, and said, mildly,

"But would you do it if your mother considered it hurtful to you, and if it would give her pain?"

Her voice trembled at these words; and the child instantly sprang away from her aunt's lap, and rushing into her mother's arms, said, affectionately,

"No, no, mamma! I will do nothing to give you pain. I won't do what dear Aunt Urica wishes, if it would make you sad. Indeed I won't."

"Humph!" ejaculated Van der Néess, in a tone of disappointment, as he turned upon his heel. "I thought we might have caught her yet."

"This is merely an afterpiece, tending to the same point as the other," said Cornelius Hooft.

"But we must put an end to it," said Angela, "for it is too agitating for my dear aunt. As the evening is so fine, I propose we should stay here and partake of the refreshments which I see Susa is preparing for us. I think some one knocked just now; perhaps it may be my dear cousin Flavia."

It was, indeed, Madame van Marseeven; she joined the group beneath the old lime-tree, and Susa spread out before them a simple but inviting meal of fresh milk, tempting fruit, and excellent homemade cakes. The twilight was gradually fading into darkness, when at length the full moon, gliding over the waters, rose above the wall of the court, and enlivened the scene with its soft mellow light.

When its rays fell on little Floris's waving ringlets, she started from her seat as if she had been called away by a playfellow, and, throwing off her loose robe of blue damask, she cried,

"Now I must go and dance with the moon! Look at me, dear Aunt Urica, and you will see how I do that. The moon likes it as much as I do; jump and turn about as I may, it follows me everywhere, and always

looks over my shoulders! Indeed, the moon and I are very fond of each other!"

So saying, she stretched out her little hands, and smiled and nodded to it.

"Ah, I believe you!" cried Urica; "if I were the moon, I should look forward with delight to the evening when I might see you again."

"So it does," said Floris, with a grave and confident nod of her head, while she busied herself in turning up the sleeves of her little shift.

Caas was then summoned. But who shall describe his feelings on being called on to perform before the mighty burgomaster, the sheriff, and these two noble ladies? Pride and despair struggled in the heart of the poor young virtuoso.

"Mercy on me," thought he, "I would rather they set all the dogs at me when I practise on the canal; or even, though it would be a grievous pity, I would rather give up my precious piece of 'kalophonium' to Van der Néess than be doomed to play the fiddle before these mighty people, who have all the musical bands of the town at their command. And yet, if it were but once, it would be something to say that I had played before the chief burgomaster and the sheriff; I should be a person of consequence."

Encouraged by this idea, Caas repeatedly passed his bowstring over his treasured piece of "kalophonium," which he had fastened to a ribbon, and constantly wore about his neck to save it from Van der Néess, who always kept his eye on it; and then drawing the bow across the strings, called forth a few dissonant notes, to apprise Floris that he was ready.

The little girl then ran across the space, that had been cleared for her, to that part of the court where the spectators were seated, and demanded her slippers of Van der Néess. This produced a very amusing interlude, for Van der Néess was fairly obliged to draw them forth from the pocket of his plush inexpressibles, where he always kept them; he did not seem much to relish this, and muttered something to himself, for he was half-ashamed of the ridiculous position in which he was placed. But this did not last long, for Floris almost tore the slippers out of his hands, in her eagerness, and hastily put them on; then placing herself opposite the moon, she fixed her eyes upon it, and commenced her self-invented fanciful moonshine dance, which for the moment caused Van der Néess to forget all his low grovelling desires, and to abandon himself wholly to the enjoyment of a father's happiness.

Like him, all the spectators were spell-bound by Floris's performance; it seemed to be something miraculous—incomprehensible; and in a transport of admiration they insensibly fell into the same delusion to which Floris so fondly clung—that the moon was dancing with her, and that she was not alone. She treated it as a playmate, and laughed, danced, and jested away, in all the gaiety of her innocent heart. Her attitudes were picturesque and graceful in the extreme; her little feet scarcely touched the ground, as she seemed to glide through the air; the movements of her arms, and her lovely head which was now bent down, now thrown back proudly as if in defiance, were the perfection of symmetry—she unconsciously expressed in her dancing that poetry of feeling which reigned in her heart. Occasionally she would utter some words, as if she were teazing the moon, or replying to it; then clap her hands

and laugh aloud, if by some sudden change of position she imagined she had taken the moon by surprise, and prevented it from following her,—then she would clasp her hands above her curly head, and, stealing along on tiptoe, cast a sly glance at her bright playmate, to see whether she was still observed and followed; till, at length, even the spectators could scarcely forbear thinking the silent orb that was gliding through the dark blue vault above them must be endowed with life and feeling, and unconsciously glanced up to ascertain whether it shared the interest it excited in the lovely child.

She never once stopped this evening, as was her wont, to rest. She was indefatigable, her imagination seemed to be inexhaustible; yet she would occasionally cease dancing, as if to allow some repose to her companion and herself, but always continued to hold converse with the moon, in pantomime, to which she would suffer no interruption; as if conscious of her mother's anxiety on her account, she would then say, half to herself,

"It won't leave off yet."

Suddenly a silvery cloud passed over the moon, and veiled it from her sight, and the bright light around her faded away. Floris uttered a joyful exclamation, and, with a merry laugh, ran into her mother's arms, saying,

"Now it is gone—it is gone to bed."

All her friends sought to persuade Floris to do the same; and, as she had really wearied herself with dancing, she consented to be led away by Susa, after she had bid "good night" to all the company, utterly unconscious of the rapturous admiration she had excited.

Before the party separated, Mynherr van Marseeven, who had heard something of Cassian's indefatigable perseverance, called to him and desired him to come to his house on the succeeding day. Thenceforward Caas received regular instructions from the master of the bands, and learnt to play from music, on a very different fiddle. The burgomaster further presented him with a neat suit of clothes, and insisted on his attending a public school, at certain hours; and Cassian, who was naturally quick and intelligent, did great credit to his instructors.

But Van der Néess was not pleased with all this; for it took up much of Caas' time, and he would soon have interfered, had he not been afraid of offending the chief burgomaster, who, he knew, often had it in his power to call him to account for sundry little practices he now consented to overlook for Angela's sake.

From that day forward, Van Marseeven always listened with interest and attention when his wife spoke of Angela; and Cornelius Hooft, to Urica's infinite amusement, was on the point of falling in love with Angela; for he even admired her appearance, and was subject to fits of absence for several days, while he insisted on delivering every message to Angela in person.

CHAPTER XX.

THE hints Van der Néess had dropped with regard to the precarious state of Urica's fortune, had not escaped Mynherr van Marseeven's memory, and had made some impression on his mind, as he knew the wary usurer kept a sharp eye on all the transactions of the great Amsterdam money-market, and

he therefore took immediate measures to ascertain the true state of the case.

Notwithstanding the precautions Urica had taken, it was impossible to keep an affair of this importance altogether secret; thus, Van Marseeven's judicious inquiries soon brought him pretty near the truth, which so infinitely surpassed his worst apprehensions, that he was seriously alarmed; for he plainly saw, that if the Duke of Montrose's expedition, in which Urica's husband was so deeply committed, should prove unsuccessful, or the young king hesitate to acknowledge the promise of repayment, Urica, from being one of the richest landed proprietors, would be reduced to little better than actual poverty.

In this state of things, Van Marseeven felt the necessity of interfering; but he hesitated for a moment how to proceed. His position towards Lord Fawcett was of a peculiar nature. Notwithstanding the esteem these two able men felt for each other, there was a sort of distance kept up between them; and little differences occasionally took place, which, to a cursory observer, would have appeared unaccountable, since their paths in life were so widely separated, and could never by any possibility cross each other.

But the mystery was accounted for in the wide disparity of their characters. Van Marseeven had not the slightest shadow of genius, and never acted on impulse. His views and actions were the result of well-weighed calculation. He had thought much and deeply; nothing ever escaped his observation; and experience, added to the advantages resulting from the important situation he had so long filled, had rendered him a refined diplomatist; with all this, he held in secret though sovereign contempt all actions that were only the result of momentary inspiration.

Lord Fawcett was a perfect contrast to him in every point of view: he was a genius, inspired by the loftiest aspirations—the noblest desires, and deeply impressed with the truth and efficacy of his views and intentions; he persuaded rather than convinced those who listened to him, for his enthusiasm captivated their understanding. Add to this, he possessed great perseverance, firmness, decision, and quick penetration; but he seldom paused to reason on any plan which his ardent imagination suggested, and his noble heart urged him to perform.

It is evident there could be but little sympathy between two men of such different dispositions, however much they might feel inclined to do each other justice; for the conduct and opinions of one were a tacit condemnation of those of the other.

But Van Marseeven now felt it incumbent upon him to open Lord Fawcett's eyes to the fate he was preparing for Urica; for he did him the justice to feel convinced that he had overlooked this, in the pressure of affairs which demanded his constant attention. With this view, he sought to win Lord Fawcett's confidence; and the frank, unsuspicious disposition of the latter rendered this no difficult task for one who had always possessed his esteem.

News had arrived of the unfavourable reception the young king had met with in France, and the failure of his hopes in Ireland. He had passed a short time in the island of Jersey, and was now returning to Holland, to meet another deputation of the Scots parliament, at Breda. Lord Fawcett shared the indignation of the Duke of Montrose, at what

they deemed so great a compromise of dignity; but the duke still adhered to his purpose, and hastened his preparations. Van Marseeven could fully enter into Fawcett's feelings, though he did not approve of the perilous enterprise in which he was engaged; and Fawcett, excited and hurt, felt relieved by the sympathy he evinced, and entered into a long, confidential conversation with him on this subject, which at length led to the explanation Van Marseeven so eagerly desired. It then appeared, that the whole of Urica's fortune, including some money raised upon her jewels, and a considerable sum procured by a mortgage on her palace at the Hague, had flowed into the military exchequer of the Duke of Montrose, and was for the most part spent. Though for a moment appalled by this statement, Van Marseeven refrained from uttering a single reproach, for he felt fully persuaded of the purity and uprightness of Fawcett's intentions; but he exerted himself to find out a remedy for the evil, as he did not by any means deem the security sufficient. He had been elected ambassador by the States-General, to meet the king at Breda, and hoped this circumstance would enable him to be of service to Urica, in this affair.

Lord Fawcett, struck by his representations, intrusted to him a small box, containing all the papers relating to the transaction, and further, confided to him all his own plans. He stated it had originally been Urica's design to accompany him in this campaign, as on a former occasion; but that the sudden resolution of the Duke of Montrose, to start immediately, had determined him to dissuade her from so doing; since he did not consider the scheme sufficiently ripe, and would not expose her to the innumerable dangers he foresaw. Van Marseeven could not help admiring the heroic devotion of this man; for he plainly saw he deemed the enterprise one of fearful risk, and yet never for a moment relaxed in his ardour.

When they parted, it was with mutual feelings of increased esteem and interest, though Van Marseeven could scarcely understand how he could feel so mildly towards the man who had so deeply compromised Urica's welfare. Lord Fawcett, on the contrary, felt as if a weight had been removed from his heart, and looked on Van Marseeven as a true and valued friend.

It was some time ere Lord Fawcett could summon courage to acquaint Urica with his desire of setting out alone; yet he felt persuaded she suspected his intentions, from the touching softness and melancholy earnestness of her manner, even on the most trifling occasions, and the emotion she betrayed when he spoke of his plans.

At length, he could no longer defer fulfilling this painful task, for it wanted but a few days of the time fixed on for the departure of the expedition. He took Urica's hand, and explained to her, in a few words, his wishes and the motives which had called them forth; he did not conceal from her the dangers of the undertaking, nor the uncertainty of its issue; dwelt for a while on his own painful feelings, and then spoke of his hopes for the future.

Urica's eye sunk to the ground, the colour faded from her cheek; she gasped for breath, and a faint scream burst from her oppressed heart. Lord Fawcett trembled at these sad demonstrations of her sorrow; he threw his arms around her, clasped her to his bosom, and strove to com-

fort her; but his manly voice quivered, and the words died away on his lips.

A solemn and melancholy silence ensued. Urica, overcome by the most poignant sorrow, and the saddest presentiments, dared not trust herself to speak; she felt as if she were destined henceforth to drain the cup of sorrow to the dregs; and instinctively shrank back, and placed her hands before her face to ward it off. When, at length, she looked up, she found that Lord Fawcett had sunk down at her feet, while tears, which he was not ashamed to show, coursed down his noble countenance.

"Speak, Urica," he cried, in accents of the deepest emotion; "in mercy, speak! you pierce me to the heart."

Here a cry of agony broke from Urica's lips. "Fawcett," she said then, in a voice of hopeless despair; "you have decided—we part—" she paused, shuddering: for a voice in her heart whispered, "for ever!" Overcome by this heart-rending effort, she sank senseless into Lord Fawcett's arms.

A few days more and Lord Fawcett was gone—he had sailed with the expedition, under the command of the Duke of Montrose, towards the shores of Great Britain. Alas! Urica's presentiments proved but too true—she never saw him again. The ill-success of this daring enterprise is but too well known; and Lord Fawcett, with three or four others, shared the fate of their gallant leader, and was executed on an accusation of high treason.

All attempts to describe Urica's state of mind, when she heard this fatal news, would be vain. Her love to Lord Fawcett had been the ruling principle of her life—*he*, the centre of all her thoughts and actions—ever since she knew him, to live and to love had appeared synonymous terms. Henceforth life must be to her a hopeless blank—death, the only boon for which she prayed to heaven; but alas! sorrow does not always wound to the death, but like slow poison, gradually saps the sources of life, and dooms the hapless sufferer to linger through an existence of protracted torments.

Thus it was with Urica; when, ten years later, General Monk accomplished what the Duke of Montrose and his noble friend projected and failed in, she was still dragging on her weary days. The only source of comfort to which she had looked forward, that of seeing Lord Fawcett's children, was denied her; and though they had now arrived at an age of independence, no inclination was showed on their part to comply with her desire of seeing them, and the letters she wrote received no reply. The news of General Monk's success affected her greatly, for it recalled to her mind the cause of all her sufferings, and renewed her poignant sorrow. Though resigned to her fate, she lived but in the memory of the past.

VALDARNO; OR, THE ORDEAL OF ART-WORSHIP.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter XI.

I found Piombino at the inn, to which I made my way, and, parting with him there, directed my course to the castle, bearing with me my dreadful secret. My sister had already proceeded with her husband on a tour through the other states, and I was alone to brood over recent domestic occurrences.

My mind was rippled like the gilded sea at sunset, over which scuds a breeze, and was lighted up by an unnatural glare. Late events, which I knew too well to be real, took the form of a dream, and it was with difficulty that I sorted them and looked steadily at their import. I could not but shudder lest there should come over me another twilight; or worse, a total eclipse of reason, during whose dire occultation the consecutive vanishes, the beautiful is sucked up as in a whirlpool, while the formless takes the infinite at a stride. My voyage, launched upon under sound of trumpet, yet so void of recompense, was like that of a good vessel which quits harbour on an unlucky day.

I sent a message to Ippolito, by Piombino, to join me at Aula. Half asleep, half dreaming at the time of his arrival, I was turning all things over in my mind, especially the mystery attached to his birth. The door stood open, and, in its turn, the vision that I had beheld in the cavern returned: I saw the same face that had so charmed my senses. My heart began to throb slowly but violently; at the same moment the figure rushed into my arms. I could not but smile on finding it was Ippolito himself.

"Are we not to be present at the Platonic Academy to-morrow?"

When he had spoken these few words, I dissociated him from the vision, so destructive of the fanciful is reality. Afterwards, however, when I came to look well into his face, which surpassed even the feminine in lustre, and to recur to the vision, which did not cease to haunt my affections, the words of Angus would return to mind. Sometimes, indeed, as he sat with me, I thought that none but a female spirit could animate features so delicate; or look out at such sinless eyes. Perhaps, struck by the love I showed him, he was led to ask if he were not my brother.

"Why that question, sweet child?"

"Who could my father be, unless it were my benefactor?" he inquired; and his looks apprised me that he had been led to think I might be his brother. Hastening to undeceive him, I said,

"You are a foundling, my child."

He looked unhappy, and, in a low voice, said, that his only desire was to be my brother.

"All that I have is yours," I rejoined; "and I love you better than any other in this world."

"O, my brother!" said Ippolito, "why should I wish for more than to be loved by you?"

"Have you never heard, dear boy, whence you came?"

"No; as long as I remember, I have lived with Marco Musonio, at Bolsena, or in the Via di Bisogno."

"Did you not, some years ago, receive a visit from a stranger, named Angus?"

"Yes; he took much notice of me, and said, laughingly, that I was a little girl, and that my name was Adora."

"Did he not question you on your birth?"

"No; but he declared that we had met in the country of the great Chartreuse, in France."

"Were you ever there?"

"Never; I told him so, and he was incredulous: but he looked so sure, I should have believed him had not his assertion been opposed to my personal recollection."

"You shall hear your history. I have it fortunately in the handwriting of my father, who left it for you among his papers. I will read it to you now: I have not perused it, having already heard all particulars from the lips of the writer. It will give me great pleasure to go through it with you, dear Ippolito, whom it so nearly concerns."

It ran as follows:—

"THE FOUNDLING.

"In the year of the late earthquake, I was at Valanidi with the countess and my two children. The preceding period had been very wet; but the weather had become fine and warm with the exception of rain-storms usual at the spring-season. I was some distance from our home on the fatal day, having crossed the land which lies between Boya and Aspramonte, on the day before, to sleep at a neighbour's house. In the morning I ascended the last-named mountain, whence I might enjoy the view of the fertile valley and its river; the olives, mulberries, and vines. That view was dear to me; it was the birthplace of a departed friend; I wished to behold it once more. I reached a considerable elevation, and at mid-day sat down on the naked granite to rest myself, and to feast my eyes on the glorious prospect, while my heart dwelt on past recollections.

"But, what is man? Alas, at the most, only distinguished among his fellows; but how insignificant as a part of nature! I had scarcely been seated half an hour, when a scene the most astonishing ensued. A shepherd, who slept by his flock on the hill-side not far beneath me, was roused by the howlings of his dog. The flock had turned itself in all directions, as if alarmed; some running up the hill, and stopping suddenly; all looking as sheep do in the slaughter-house, amid the flow and scent of blood. A few moments later, I heard subterraneous thunder, and felt the rock on which I sat oscillate beneath me. I stood up in mute surprise, which speedily changed into consternation; for while I looked the mountain opened below me and closed. The shepherd and his flock were at some distance beneath the fearful aperture; and as its jaws of granite gaped, they were thrown off their legs and rolled down the steep. But this danger over, another speedily overtook them. Before they reached the mountain gorge beneath, the soil from which they had been precipitated followed, and, with it, they contributed only to fill up the gulf. They had vanished in a moment; I was still safe! As I looked around in silent horror, I beheld a forest on my right descending in one mass into the valley. Some of its lofty trees were overthrown; most of them re-

mained erect, as, with the loosened soil in which they grew, they travelled towards the plain. There they halted, there to live on, and there be watered by the swollen river which had been before fed by their own mountain streams. All around me was desolate; the granite was bared. I had sat myself down within the shade of olives and vines, bordered with sweet-scented broom, rose, laurel, and citron; I arose to witness a bare region, my soul no less naked! I thought not of myself, but hastily descended with a heart ready to rescue a fellow-creature; but, in a few minutes, I bethought myself how vain would be my attempt. Submissive to an almighty will, I turned my steps towards home. In my way, I found cottages, some overturned, some displaced from their former site, and with them the lands. At a distance stood their owners, in whose faces I saw, as in a glass, that look of horror which occupied mine, and at which my hair bristled afresh. I endeavoured to cross the valley; but was unable to overcome the obstacles, for the fields and plantations of the mountain had covered it; in many places had formed rugged and steep embankments where just before there had been a plain. Foiled in each attempt to make my way home, I took the direction of Reggio, which was near, and with difficulty reached it; but it was no longer the place which it had been.

"Before I arrived at the town, I saw, from the hills above it, that the shock had not been confined to Aspramonte. The villas outside it were broken into large fragments, some of which stood, while others had fallen. As I entered, silence and despair greeted me; the streets were the home of the homeless. Beside a heap of ruins, and on a bed made of sweet-scented broom, lay a fine male child, over whose remains, with an infant in her arms, wept a mother. Two little children who were with her, the elder a girl of about three, the younger a boy of two years old, slept deeply by the side of their father. They each held a hand, and had fallen asleep fatigued with vainly imploring their exhausted parent to wake up. This was but one of many pictures of mourning; and I stood in the midst, gazing by turns on what was near and afar. The town looked battered by some enemy that had marched on never to return, for there were no fears; the worst appeared done. Yet, in the midst of despair, did new fear have occasion to awaken—the paralysed heart to revive—and undergo another struggle. All the dogs in the vicinity of where I was suddenly set up a fearful howl; as if the signal were too well known, the populace looked at each other, no longer mute and hopeless, wrung their hands and groaned, and knelt, and uttered the names of well-known saints, of friends, of kindred, and of the Eternal. But the gestures and woes of men were but a prelude to what instantaneously followed. The earth heaved; houses, men, and cattle fell in confusion together: all was as soon still again.

"I arose from the earth, on which I had been thrown down in time to see the beams of a house close by batter down its own walls. The buildings were all upon one another. I looked for my adopted neighbours; I saw the fissure of a chasm which had opened and shut; the father and his two children were gone, Nature had buried them; had engulfed her living. The mother lay by the side of the miraculous tomb thus made, thus filled, and thus with eternity blended; her infant shaded by her bosom. The convulsion by which she had been precipitated to the earth only shook her child from the breast where it slept. She knew nothing,

and happy at such a moment was she to be unconscious. Her hair was spread over the grave; her arms, and the infant they bore, had, also, dropped gently upon it, and thus did Nature add a monument to the tomb she had made. I sat by the side of it: with my face buried in my hands, and my elbows resting on my knees, I wept.

"Afar and near the dirge of the afflicted was expressed in groan and scream; all asked for help, and no one heeded another. The ruins had a voice—the voice of hundreds entombed in their own dwellings. I explored the chasm, and saw steps near it: by the aid of a charitable labourer, I opened a way into a cellar, where I saw the lost father with his eyes wide open; he, and one of the children, a girl, was alive; the other I vainly sought to restore. When his senses returned, he arose, looked wildly around with his large dark eyes, and uttered the remarkable words: 'I have risen again!' He then raised his living daughter on his shoulder, and, like the spirit of the earthquake, walked away; his brain turned with trouble, leaving me to provide safety for the infant and mother. By this time it was much past midnight, whose dusky, though star-enchanted hour, was the witness of shame and confusion. The earthquake was not confined to matter; its convulsion had touched the soul, and had swallowed up humanity in the wreck. Cruelty, and its victim, suffering, had supplanted mutual love; the ties of nature were all slackened; the good were found more selfish than before, as well as the wicked. Had the ruin been less general, all might have been saved; as it was, there was no one to help any save his own.

"The shock was a signal to the peasantry, both of the town and adjacent villages, to seek out the dwellings of the rich for plunder: for the agents of the law, like the rest of men, were helpless. As I gave myself up to restore the widow to her only child, the bandits rushed by into the town, in troops, making a jest of tottering walls and falling towers. Amid all this riot, I almost shrank from my charge, and thought of my family at Valanidi with dire apprehension.

"I proceeded a few yards from my post in search of water, and round the corner of a street found a well which overflowed in abundance, but was muddy and impregnated with sulphur. As I dipped a broken jug into the bubbling flood, I groaned at the vanity of man; how uncertain his tenure even of time! Opposite me were the fresh remains of a monastery of large dimensions; the vaulted arches alone, of what appeared the sacristy, had sustained the shock and borne the weight of the ruins. From within proceeded the voice of woe and the language of reproach; but it was heeded by none and heard by few. The poor bereaved mother drank of the water; the child refused it. Among the fragments around me I found an iron pot, and, from amidst the fallen stones, gathered up some macaroni. Next I kindled a fire, and boiled the food, with which I quieted the ceaseless cry of the child. The mother, unable to move, raised her large and gentle eyes, which she fixed upon me with a fervour which thrilled through my soul. In that look she thanked me, blessed me, besought me not to desert her babe. She sighed deeply, moaned piteously with an expression of weeping, though no tear came forth to give hope of recovery. The flesh of her limbs quivered; her eyes remained fixed upon me, but their pupils had become dilated and sightless. She breathed after a long interval, and was then still for ever. I closed her eyes, took a gem from her finger, buried her by the side of her chil-

dren, and departed with her lovely infant in the direction taken by its father. The sun had risen as it daily rises over Palmyra. It cheered what was left, and promised what the heart, unassisted by its beams, could not have hoped. I went my way, crossing the fields which lie towards Valanidi, intending to return and seek intelligence of the infant's parentage, and hoping to recover it a father. The clumps of agrumi, composed of bergamot, orange, citron, lemon, and other of the species, were in many places under water, the rivers and streams being blocked up and swollen by displacements of the soil. This was not the only impediment to my homeward journey; large clumps of mulberry-trees and olives, with their intermingled vines, all of which grow amidst a profusion of grain in the same field, were prostrate; and I had to climb over branches, wade through bogs, and ascend embankments, more difficult to steer through than the adjacent mountains to traverse at other times. Though all that I had witnessed inspired a fear that the earthquake had been yet more disastrous abroad than my own eyes could vouch for, I was thankful to find, that as I advanced towards my own country the mischief faded from my sight. At last I got home, and found my family and dwelling secure: the sweetness of that security was such as neither narrative nor thanksgiving can declare.

"Several times during my stay at Valanidi I revisited Reggio, to the end that I might identify the parents of the boy; but I met with no success. The utmost that I could learn was, that they were not Italians, and that the father had not been again seen with his daughter in that place. To this day, all my inquiries about this ill-fated family have been fruitless. The ring, now in Ippolito's possession, I took from the finger of his mother. It is marked inside, at the back of the ruby, with the initial A.

"The last time I saw Ippolito, the form of his countenance suggested a curious train of thought. It has a striking resemblance to one in whose presence I have not been for many years—I allude to the Marchioness of Ferrini. The opportunity of his meeting her may occur one day: if it does, let him carry his ring with him, and show it to her. The idea out of which this suggestion comes is vague, and admits of no explanation: it has no other basis than that of an imagined resemblance between the lady and the child.

"Finally, I commend this charming boy to my son's brotherly affection, even to such love as is due to kindred: he is an orphan, and his birth is illustrious."

Ippolito was deeply affected at hearing the contents of the manuscript, which gave so mournful a history of his unknown house: and he asked leave to retain the paper in his possession.

I was not a little startled at my father's allusion to Dione, after my own discovery and subsequent meditations on that exciting subject.

Chapter XII.

"You spoke of the Platonic Academy: Musonio's discourse was to have been three weeks since," said I, to Ippolito.

"The meeting was postponed, owing to political causes, and is now to take place to-morrow," replied he.

"Then we will go," I said; "and I can leave you once more with Pulci, at Florence."

"You will be very much surprised to hear the opinions Musonio entertains," observed the youth.

"I wish much to be present," said I, "for his notions concern the race to which I belong—he, like myself, is Etruscan."

"He has told me his principles again and again," rejoined Ippolito; "and I see the truth of them as plainly as I perceive an order in nature; yet I cannot feel it."

"What influence have the doctrines held by Pulci on your mind?"

"The very opposite of what I have experienced from Musonio's philosophy; I am unable, as yet, to perceive the truth of Christianity, but I feel it plainly in my heart."

"And it is sufficient to know it there; to see it, would be to stand before the opening heavens; it is too great for mortal eyes to behold."

In the days of the great Lorenzo, philosophy and religion were companions as often as rivals. Pico, the Lord of Mirandola, whose vast understanding reflected all human knowledge, had harmonized them in his divine writings; a man who was the ornament of that age, and the life of the Platonic Academy. When Lorenzo and a magnificent circle, amongst whom every thought that Plato first gave birth to became newly embodied, had retired from the stage, Rucellai, his kinsman, invited the Platonists to his own gardens in the Via della Scala, and there the meetings were further continued for a time. But, with the banishment of the Medici, despite the efforts of other men, the academy fell, and Platonism no longer had a home.

It is not uncommon for the man of genius to reverence some one contemporary above the rest of his enlightened fellow-mortals, and to deem him even the greatest of men. The one he thus looks up to must be his elder, and, in some high attainment, his better. Man is in dependence on man; the living must connect him with the past, introduce him to the mighty, whose spirits are inseparable from the twilight glory of its deathless shades. He cannot get there alone; he wants a hand to guide him to cities which once were, but now lie back as if beneath the horizon, floating as in an ancient sunset, while the world itself expects a morrow.

The past is sacred ground! The multitude clings to the by-gone time; it is its history; but the future is a yet more distant country, to which the few alone dare emigrate. It is a howling wilderness, which has to be subdued and civilised; it is bristled with dayless forests; it is peopled with untamed giants. But there is a sun which reaches its waters, and shines upon as vast a tract as the land where the mighty rest; and it shines there with hope for the living—with promise for the longing heart of man! It was Musonio who was destined to become my last idol; to connect me with the past and the future, too, of which his awful intellect constituted the central link. As a creature of mind, I never have known his equal! He had no vanity, he desired no applause; his only wish was fame, not for himself but for his philosophy, which he believed to be a well-shaded portrait of the Omniscient. But of such reputation a smile expressed his despair, at least in the age possessing him—an age which was his sepulchre, his fellow-mortals the cold dust which completed his living tomb! Still, thus buried in life instead of death, thus imbedded in the dark impenetrable mould of human prejudice, his intellect struck the deeper root and bore perennial leaves; and he wished not his self-acquired knowledge to perish with him. Having known me and sounded my

depths, he at once looked to me as a depositary for his secrets, as a hand that would receive them thankfully and pass them on religiously, as the clear-minded Greek had done for his master of old; and as less efficiently the saints had done for their divine instructor, who said and did far greater things than have been recorded. He had trained Ippolito in part with a view to make him his disciple; but finding in me a mature, as well as willing pupil, he was anxious to teach me what he knew: and faithfully will I edit my sacred book, that it may worthily succeed to that which Tages gave us at religion's dawn.

"This is the fittest hour for the expression of high thoughts," said Musonio, as, on the appointed evening, about two hours before twilight, we found ourselves happily met in the Rucellai gardens; "nor is the place and time ill-suited to such occupation. The calmness of the hour is with me a check to imagination, and an encourager of reason; the quiet of the scene around us, and the fertility of nature and art on every side, forbid me to express thoughts inconsistent with intellectual truth. When we discuss the objects of nature, how they guide us; a leaf is a more formidable opponent by far than man, its silent advocacy of the real says more than all the citations of human learning."

To this view I gave assent, and desired the philosopher to proceed; but, by this time, a circle of hearers had arrived and we took our places among the crowd. Ippolito, who was used to these discussions, lead me to a seat in front of the speaker. The following short account of the philosopher's address was written down on the night of that memorable meeting. I well remember with what applause he was received by the members of the academy, and the numerous discussions to which, for some time after, his short but far-reaching axioms gave rise.

"Were the ideas which I am about to express my own," said Musonio; "were they due only to the workings of one mind, I should speak with diffidence; but they are not: I owe them in great part to the sacred writings of the ancients, to whose now palsied tongue I have learned the root, obtained through the study of Etruscan remains, of which many are still in possession of the world, though little known. Respect them then the more; they are amongst the most early of spiritual treasures, and emanate from a select race whose minds were of a mathematical order. The truths which they contain, though thus old, are imperishable; if lost, they must be found again. They concern our present happiness and future fate; they contain the only philosophy which reconciles all things, which allows injustice to glory in its own evils, which assures us that even as reason, and all that else is good, exists, so must all endure for ever. It proves that the universe in its least as well as greatest operations, is to be eventually revealed; that man, in common with his fellow-creatures beneath him, has a share in all; it convinces by reason alone, not subject to the sceptic's doubt, but indisputably that he will take a part in all things future, that he has already throughout the past been an actor."

My curiosity was deeply touched by these statements. I desired to possess a key said to open such stores of knowledge; of wisdom supposed to be hidden from mortals.

As the philosopher here paused, in expectation of remarks from some one of the audience, I myself intreated him to give us an account of discoveries thus surprising.

"My mind," said the priest of nature, "is full of its responsibilities, and would place before you, in one view, the system it has perceived in things. There are certain truths palpable to reason which we deduce from endless observation, these most of you will follow; but there are men who invite us to explain admitted laws, and in the company of such the grand argument is unattainable."

"Give us an example," said one of the members.

"If, for instance, you tell such men that matter cannot be destroyed," said Musonio, "in place of the ready assent which is due to a proposition thus obvious in philosophy, there is an expression of doubt and wonder. To many a man the consumption of the oil which feeds his lamp is the destruction of matter. He cannot trace its aërial elements to the sky, or perceive them dropping again upon the earth to mingle with its productions. Nor can we by the senses alone; but we know that such things are. Through endless ages not a single particle is lost. The atom is imperishable; it is the true type of immortality."

"All this I can understand," rejoined the member who had before spoken.

"It is with such as you," continued Musonio, "that I would converse. The materials of which the universe consists are of an imperishable nature; they were admitted to be so by the Etruscan priesthood, if I have deciphered their characters aright, and the experience of many thousand years, even of alchemy itself, has confirmed the truth. But not only did the wise men consider that matter was imperishable, but that its laws were immutable, consequently eternal; and this opinion has been equally confirmed by time."

All assented, silently, being anxious to hear his views without delay.

"The old Etruscans," resumed the thoughtful man, "declare in their sacred writings that the universe is finite in extent, how otherwise could it have been reduced to order, since the illimitable must ever elude the hand of power, though it work in eternity! Be sure that He who compasseth all round about, is infinite alone, and without a rival. He hath limited the stars, he hath numbered them no less distinctly than the sand upon the ancient shores. Though they may appear innumerable to the finger of man long before he has had time to count up the vastness of a single continent of light, or seeming isle, in those peaceful seas (through which the comets sail unendangered), they are bounded by omniscient vision; even as each is singled out, so a finite number represents all. Canst thou comprehend these truths?"

"I perceive," said I, "that the Infinite hath put in order a finite system, under immutable, eternal laws."

"Then," said the philosopher, "thou knowest much; but the Etruscans taught us still more. They insisted that from these truths we must deduce the real resurrection from the dead, the revival of all that has been. For, say they, the laws of matter are ever in action; no union of elements can subsist always; change succeeds to change. The hills crumble away, mountains are thrown up from the deep, old forms of life vanish, new ones appear. And, varied as are these revolutions, slow as is the course of things throughout, there is no need of hurry; the expectancy of time can wait, for time itself, and it only, is inexhaustible. Its wheels undergo no friction, they partake not of the wear and tear of the globes that they grind to dust, but survive all change; and they revolve at the same pace,

though every atom may at length have been employed in every possible relation throughout the universal system."

"But though change may proceed for ever, can it affect an individual who has died and is no more?" inquired I; "yet evident is it what must be your answer."

"It must affect us all, not only once, but periodically, through eternity. The finite universe, however great, cannot attain to an infinite variety of change; the hour must therefore come again when all things possible have been accomplished. And then all that has before been must recommence its solemn march."

For some moments I was silent. I had carefully followed Musonio through the outline of his system, and was astonished at the mathematical precision with which he arrived at results so incredible. He detected the difficulty which filled my mind, in common with that of the assembly—one which, no doubt, he once had experienced himself.

"You see the accuracy of my argument, but are unable to realise its fruits."

"Even so," said the member who had before taken part in the argument. "How can we conceive that this earth and all its productions will one day grow old no longer, but become young again, and once more pass through its early career? How can we suppose that it is again to be a globe of fire, which is to cool and vitrify; that the Alps are to be again children; that the extinct things of the lost ages are to re-occupy their olden abodes, to live again; that oblivion is once more to pass over their forms like an obliterating shadow? How are we to believe that our first parents are to be born and to sin again; that their descendants are once more to spread over the land and sea; that the hero is to fall in battle; that the philosopher and the poet are to reason and enjoy their triumphs again? And if all this is to be as it has been, we are to know it no more than we now recollect our ancient career of being!"

"A memory may be in type capable of this continuous recollection: we must not opine from the present, which appears far remote from the age of utmost wonders. But you cannot realise all this yet. To believe it myself was the work of years, the labour of constant meditation."

"Are we then," said I, "to meet our parents again on earth?"

"In every character, every form of good and evil, and finally as they were in this present epoch?"

"Is there to be another sacrifice—a death and resurrection—merely for the hope of man?"

"Ay: and even as a new earth, so shall a new heaven succeed when the old has passed away! Thus doth the mighty cycle contain all, restore all, and sweep away all!"

"The sublimity of the doctrine," said I, "sufficeth not to conceal the painful consequences which its reality would entail: the vain sorrow, the unrequited love——"

"Fear not, my son," said Musonio; "there is hope even in this philosophy; hope worthy of an immortal soul; of a child of the truest God. Only think, that before any one complete cycle can have run, your own intelligence must have been in union with every form of being that is compatible with organic laws. The heights and depths of space will be opened to you, the distant worlds will receive you, you will be detained in each for a period little short of an eternity to mortal computation, and

will converse with the spirits of them all. What knowledge, what experience, may they not reveal in the midst of new celestial scenes! Now the day is but as an hour's duration, the night equal, in the midst of the most beautiful worlds, rising and setting too rapidly and gloriously to conceive of; and now no day, but a perpetual starlight, seen for ages as from a triumphal car on its way into some remote constellation. You will thus know all things in succession; losing sight of one series, obtaining it of another, an omniscience will pass through your undying soul, and you will ever, as at this hour, enjoy portions of its elevating power."

"But the slightest fallacy in your premises would destroy all these hopes which your philosophy holds out."

"I have submitted those premises to every test. They have been placed before the most unerring mathematicians, and accepted as possible, nay certain, if there be no Divine interference. The moralist sees in my system only justice dealt out to all the universe alike; the pious perceive in its consequences nothing but cause for gratitude and awe. Even the miserable are reconciled to their lot by its provisions, which declare that their degree of happiness is as great in the course of time as that of the rest, though not co-existent with it."

"But when we die there is surely a period of repose; how long is that to last according to these doctrines?"

"It may last for any length of time short of the everlasting."

"But that is as bad as death itself."

"Not so; for this temporary sleep is unconscious of time, and is therefore less than momentary; but the actual existence is restored, subject to endless repetitions, and is therefore equal to an immortality, with unconscious intervals of sleep."

"You mete out time and space with a wide grasp; and you yet appear consistent in all you say on a subject so awful. How, let me ask, is the soul to pass through the universe, as you propose, and in process of time to behold all?"

"The destiny of the soul," answered Musonio, "ever has been, and will be, associated with matter. It can travel from sphere to sphere only by aid of attraction, that first law, which blends and again crumbles up the mightiest system. Think you, O son of light, that the nebular mist which seems like the breath of the Almighty, condensed as it issues forth, is really new?—no more than the fumes which issue from the sun. It may have returned to the infancy of its existence, be pure as of old, be ready to flow into the bosom of some breathing star, or to nourish the spirit of those plains which, silent and remote, inspire a sense of music afar off, heard only as love is felt; or mercy, as it touches the heart; but it is not, was never new."

"But, my dear father," I concluded, "may not the laws, as in the logarithm, alter unexpectedly as they advance in their mysterious work? May not perfection, whenever arrived at, present that strength of union among its parts that no new affinities can dissever? In other words, may not man, once made perfect, continue to be so ever after?"

"Had that been possible, it would have happened long ago; it would have constituted the original, the unalterable condition, not been the work of nature. But the spirit of nature is change."

The company, after lingering for some hours around the philosopher, at last separated with regret. The discourse left upon my mind a feeling

indefinite in character, which carried me back to a seemingly former state of being. Was the early past, or was it not a profound blank? Was the future to be indicated to us by a prospective—the past by a pre-existent sympathy? Was all to be revealed through science, even heaven itself? Or, after all, since eternity has so many heirs, was the present the just portion of each?

This philosophy of Musonio, mighty as was the thought it asserted, taught us no moral consequences, at least not in the sum of things, whatever our conduct might be; but it was a grateful doctrine to one like myself, who at that moment was not unwilling to let injustice have its course. I confess that I felt unequal to my duty, that of rendering up my secret, and bringing the wicked to judgment; in doing so I must have involved the happiness of the innocent in the ruin of the guilty. There was one unsuspecting creature, my sister, whose look of blighted joy I could not have met; I must accordingly endure the penalty of my own infirmity, at the mercy of my Maker, rather than stand forward, and, with fatal evidence, cast a blight over the prospects of that happy being. Why should I not suffer in conscience, for however long a term, if it would save the guiltless? It was my fault that Moro had appeared on the stage at all; I had placed him in the way of the poniard. Let not his anger, then, fall on those who had injured him owing to my interference, but on me. It was a bad bargain to make with the laws of justice; but it was the best that my conscience would allow.

While these reflections were yet fresh within my mind, Mezzofonte entered the library to announce Piombino, for I had again reached home.

"I am glad to see you at Aula," I said, with feigned delight; "you have mounted the canvas, and the promised gold is due."

"No canvas can I mount, alas! no gold accept, until the wound of Moro heals; I lament to say the sore is eating into the core of his once gay heart," replied Piombino.

"And what is to be done?"

"We must have recourse to justice."

"Impossible! Repeat not the proposal, unless you would quit my presence for ever."

Moro was silent.

"What evidence can be adduced?"

"Your own, Montecatino's, and mine."

"My evidence, say you? Who can penetrate what I have not dared to repeat within myself?"

"You are known to have aided me in tracking the associate of the murderer to the cavern; and the description Moro gives of the assassin agrees with the form and stature of him whom Thanatos walked with from the cave."

"O my God!" exclaimed I, "in our worldly pursuits we do best without seeking thee, but we are made to feel our neglect in an hour of need like this! If we then raise our thoughts to thee, our hearts are heavy, and remain below; so that we seek but follow not thy ways. In thy presence I see what my duty is, but am far too weak to fulfil it."

"You are distressed almost beyond the occasion; do you dread lest your secretary should prove a guilty party?"

"Leave me to consider the matter, at least for a few days: you shall then hear my decision."

The few days were over; my difficulty was the same: it was easier to temporise than to decide aright. During this uncertainty a visitor was announced: it was Montecatino. At first I resolved not to receive him, but on consideration thought it best to submit to an interview.

"This is a friendly visit," I said; "you are still solicitous about my health."

"I am," replied Montecatino, smiling; "but you look well, and probably have little occasion for assistance. Other business has aided in determining my presence here."

"You will remain a few days?"

"I return to-night."

"Let us have no business; the day is fine, we will walk, and then dine early."

"I had only to remark that I have strictly kept my promise of secrecy as to having overtaken your secretary on the road, on the day of Moro's untoward fate."

"What is to be done?"

"It appears that you and the painter have completed the chain of evidence against him; we should now see to his arrest."

I could have dropped on the floor, such was the agony I felt at this cool proposal—so fatal were the consequences that I foresaw. It was a crisis which none but a single-minded follower of truth could have met with honest purpose. As a child of fancy, the sensibility of my nature told me, like a telegraph upon the remotest confines of spirit, the worst that could happen; but, collecting my senses, I took time, before replying, to correct this aberration of my timid judgment by reference to ordinary standards, and replied:

"One can hardly suppose that Thanatos, or any one else, could really seek Moro's life; it must have been a mistake from first to last—a frolic of our Florentine youth, not intended to take a fatal turn!"

"No mistake, I fear," said Montecatino; "the friends of Pallavicini, with perhaps the count himself, have been at the bottom of the affair."

"The count Pallavicini!"

"I do not know; but if such be your suspicion, as it is mine, your best plan is to quit Tuscany for a short time, and take Thanatos with you."

"There is some pleasure in talking to a man of sense. Have you seen Moro lately?"

"He sent me to you. Poor fellow! I could not refuse to come; for his life hangs upon the result of this affair."

"Can you not keep him quiet?"

"No; he is one of the innocents, unused to the ways of life; and his good heart is so shocked at the cruel injustice of his enemies, that he does not recover his health."

"Be kind to him; give him no hope of revenge, but every promise of advancement."

"And I have a letter for you from the old Countess of Strozzi, who is my patient."

When Montecatino had left, I perused the letter: it was to make me acquainted with the marriage of Melissa to the Duke of Valisneri, and to transmit me a message from the Marchioness of Ferrini inviting me to Siena once more.

I was fully alive to the horrors of my situation. Curiosity to learn

the truth, coupled with a desire to see Moro avenged, had led to the acquisition of a secret, to keep which would render me unworthy of life; while to disclose it must conduce to the ruin of the one nearest to me on earth; for Orazio had hired the assassin Scoronconcolo, and when his suit was safe had sent Thanatos to arrest the blow.

I allowed days to glide away in inactivity; but my irresolution was brought to a sudden end by an unlooked-for event.

I was by the window, when an object presented itself to my view too trying to endure. I shouted to Mezzofonte for the horses.

"Get horses ready without delay," I said, "and let Thanatos be summoned."

The horses stood ready at the gate, and Thanatos was shortly in my presence. I confronted him with looks of despair.

"The ghastly visage of Moro is to be seen!" I said; "his figure approaches slowly along the avenue. Come to the window! look out! He leans forward on his saddle, and pants for breath! Now he alights, and sinks back against a tree! I have no longer fortitude to bear the terrors which the sight has for me; it strikes to the root of my being, it plunges deeper than the springs of pity! Has the sight no terrors for you? Let us then prepare, like cowards, for rapid flight! The blood of the half-slain man leaves him no peace of mind; it was wantonly shed, and it haunts him like the faint mist which comes up from a grave prematurely dug. Yes! its shade clings to his eyeballs, and tortures his soul with thirst for others' blood. The creeping fiend of vengeance has instilled poison into his heart. Let us away!"

I hurried down the stairs, followed by the agitated criminal, whose knees shook under him. In a few seconds more we were mounted, our horses in a full gallop on the Siena road.

"I am to look on the bride, then, to-day! Had she behaved more feelingly, I should now have been at peace. To her conduct do I trace my misfortunes. To indulge in an unamiable pride, she has thrown me into the rugged pass, and I know not what I may find on the other side."

Such were my thoughts, and they repeated themselves in muffled silence during the hours of my flight from home.

Chapter XIII.

Woe unto the works of God!

O, woman, the beautiful, the beloved! for yet how long a time is destiny, through thee, to people the unvisited Far with souls?

There is one besides thee who suffers for love—your Redeemer! And not he alone, but yet another.

Lift up your torch, ye pure of mind! Are we not all your children? Shall we not follow?

She told me of her love. I returned not her passion, but told her what I had suffered for the love of another.

See ye this, my children? Yet where are ye now? Gone into the hollow earth! See ye this weapon? It is rusty and old, but the name engraved at its point is still legible. For the love of her whose name it is, I, too, could once have perished on the cross.

Then why did one else love the unhappy, the worn-out heart? Was

it to be? Was she also to suffer? Sorrow is the offspring of sorrow; its motto, "I can never forget."

Look upward, my children, and regard the heavens! And yet, where are ye now? But one only of our race is left to suffer.

Look out from the hollow earth, and regard me. Listen to my voice, that ye may learn what retribution is; observe, that ye may know how deep must be humility. It is only in youth that we can enjoy wickedness; the victory is declared against us in our old age. Those who repent not in health, are subdued by sickness; and feeble is the last struggle of the hardened heart.

Hark! I am among voices of the past; my soul is in the chorus. They laugh and chatter like those who were young of old; yet, when I listen, a silence rushes at my ear. A chord of memory, is it? Then what I have indited is the wandering of a troubled brain; let it be as a record of what I am.

I resume, after a lapse, the thread of my narrative.

I reached Siena, and saw them all again. The party was a fragment of what I had once seen there; and better was it to be left so. The mosaic of human things falls to pieces; supply not the places of those who are gone. The family, however, still held together, and Giuditta was there as at first, the youngest of the Piccolomini.

If there lived a being more pure and beautiful than the rest of women, it was Giuditta! There was a lightness in her form belonging to the spirit; her complexion was alabaster shaped to thought, and tinged with the blush of innocency. Her blue eyes seemed to have imbibed the mellowness of the sky, but to yield it a softer light than its own; while between every limb and feature there was an indefinable harmony of which we vainly seek the centre, lost in a labyrinth of beauty!

In how many does it happen that the outward charms are so perfect as to eclipse even the intellect within. The messengers of creation are often like the sculptor, they neglect not a feature's shade, but slumber over their inward work; so difficult is it to fashion the soul. They know how to endow with virtue the most pure, to ornament with gifts, as well as to impose over the whole mind a gentle imagination. But there is a force wanting, and superstition is allowed to creep in as an invisible parasite; this grows slowly, entwines itself about the true faculties, and, sapping them, checks their further growth, and at length dominates over the simple fields of thought.

Giuditta was superstitious; and yet how good! There was a pausing gentleness in her opinions more ravishing to the lover than unfettered thought, and a cultivation so varied as to exceed all natural attainments. Such was the control she had over herself, emotion had of late been to her as the element of a different sphere; she had banished it from a sense of duty, and become in consequence calm and hopeful as the future. There was a sweet expression in her face due solely to harmony of feature, such as might hang upon the lips while the mind sleeps; but so prolific was the brightness of her nature, that one ray of intellect would give her countenance the aspect of solid light.

Her figure was tall and erect; her movements almost haughty, as if the frame itself were conscious of symmetry and grace. She moved upon the earth in all the majesty of a wave upon the waters—dimpled,

ever-changing, unlike all besides; the world and its beauties subdued for a moment into the scenery on which she trod.

And Melissa was married; she had become the Duchess of Valisneri! We met cheerfully; she too happy to feign sadness, I too miserable not to appear gay. Her mother was the same; she received me with affection, the maternal tie unruptured between us, though her child had bounded from my arms.

My father's last hope was to meet her in heaven. He died wifeless, she a widow; their union might almost have commenced on earth. But the self-control which, as I firmly believed, had saved him and her in early life stepped in; he knew that his love had put limits to his life,—why should he make the object of such love a mourner? She would weep enough in secret when he died; let her not witness his end! How beautiful, too, was that love,—how incorporeal. He had seen her in loveliness, and resisted an affection which proved mutual. He still desired to be with her in her age; though toothless and wrinkled, he would have idolised her as he had done in youth. Her spirit was the same spirit that made her young voice thrill, her young eye brighten; the same that caused her youthful breast to sigh. It was the same spirit that could not sleep for love, the same that resisted every temptation because it loved with humility. It was the spirit that had suffered for him all these years,—the spirit he had cherished so long, that he had sculptured from faithful remembrance, and that had haunted the delirious remains of his reason to the dying hour. I went and beheld her; she pressed me like a child to her embrace, the conjunction of two desolate beings. In Dione the beautiful look remained; there was no decay. Virtue, and love, and sadness, will often embalm the countenance in her who cares not to preserve her charms.

Melissa was more changed than Dione. As the duke, her husband, was not with her, I was often by her side as formerly. After some days we got accustomed to each other, laughed sometimes, and talked much. We made casual allusions to the past, not expressive of all its eventful story, yet sometimes, as by way of moral experiment, sounding its deepest parts. My heart was full of woe, but I concealed it, and encouraged Melissa to address herself to former times. She became interested afresh in my welfare, and aspired even thus late to make me happy.

In the city of Siena still lives the family of Piccolomini; among the members of which she had one dear friend, still unmarried, named Giuditta! I had not long been at Siena before I found that this beautiful young person was an inmate, once more, of the same mansion with myself, and I soon discovered beyond a doubt that it was Melissa's wish to see us attached to each other. I could have loved Giuditta, had she not been Melissa's friend. She was her second self; through her, but destitute of the fatal chances of such an act, Melissa would love me once more. She knew the happiness which I was capable of sharing with an object worthy of my attachment; she wished the object to be one with whom she could feel. She had forfeited my passion herself; but now, with a deviation from what is right, perceptible to platonic minds, she was anxious to engage me in the love of one whom she loved, and thus to unite herself to me within another.

I had been once bitterly disappointed, yet sometimes would a feeling

awaken within me in favour of that fine form and noble spirit that Melissa had placed at the disposal of my affections. Across the dark yet tranquil weather of a soul still sick, the lightning of desire would flash, and for an instant declare the heavens. And these were glimpses of bliss, not new yet grateful; not selfish, for they vanished as they came.

Giuditta was not insensible to hopes entertained by her relation, and in the simplicity of her nature gave them credence. She would now retire to rest with her fancy steeped in the colours of sunset, the hope emblazoned and displayed within her dream, the hope of the morrow; to awake at morn and see the mountain tops, which the evening before were azured and gilded in the twilight, become an outline and surface of snow. Such was the shifting scenery of love on which her constancy would seek repose. But the climate of my soul was changeable, like that of my native land, and not, at any time, to be rendered ever-bright by love. My blighted hopes, instead of reviving under Giuditta's smile, were but opened like the rarer plants which spread their leaves in winter only to be silvered by the frost.

When she saw me moved, which I was at times, partly by the sight of her affection, and in part by the remembrance of my own, she would gaze on me too long, and change into dislike the little love I knew. I have then turned away, my expression has altered, I have struggled as with a fiend, and that to merely disguise my lips with a smile. Yet often would a momentary impulse dispose me to melt before that sun of beauty, and rejoice in the light which issued from those blue eyes. But the warm emotion has unfailingly returned in suicidal terror to its source, and perished on the confines of the heart.

To prove to myself the true nature of my feelings, for could I have loved her I would have yielded, I have received Giuditta in my arms and embraced her, but it has been with unimpassioned caresses. For, while all this was passing, it was not Giuditta's soul that seemed present with me: it was Melissa with whom I had the new battle of love to fight, for it was she who had invoked my affection afresh. Her own heart was occupied with another, but she offered me the heart of her friend, in which we might meet and be unlawfully united.

She would sacrifice her friend to the man whom she had rejected; she would place the humble and meek in the hands of him whom she found unbending; she would give her innocent companion who had never loved, to him whose love she had driven from her to wander alone through life like a spirit of heaven, accursed undeservedly, and fated to carry within it the thoughts of bliss, yet never to attain the delights.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXECUTIONER.

HALF-AN-HOUR after this, two of the arquebussiers returned with Hal o' Nabs, whom they had succeeded in capturing, after a desperate resistance, about a mile from the abbey, on the road to Wiswall. He was taken to the guard-room, which had been appointed in one of the lower chambers of the chapter-house, and Demdike was immediately apprised of his arrival. Satisfied by an inspection of the prisoner, whose demeanour was sullen and resolved, Demdike proceeded to the great hall, where the Earl of Derby, who had returned thither after the midnight mass, was still sitting with his retainers. An audience was readily obtained by the wizard, and, apparently well pleased with the result, he returned to the guard-room. The prisoner was seated by himself in one corner of the chamber, with his hands tied behind his back with a leathern thong; and Demdike approaching him told him that for having aided the escape of a condemned rebel and traitor, and violently assaulting the king's lieges in the execution of their duty, he would be hanged on the morrow, the Earl of Derby, who had power of life or death in such cases, having so decreed it. And he exhibited the warrant.

"Soh, yo mean to hong me, eh, wizard?" cried Hal o' Nabs, kicking his heels with great apparent indifference.

"I do," replied Demdike; "if for nothing else, for slaying my hound."

"Ey dunna think it," replied Hal. "Yo'n alter your moind. Do mon. Ey'm nah prepared to dee just yet."

"Then perish in your sins," cried Demdike; "I will not give you an hour's respite."

"Yo'n be sorry when it's too late," said Hal.

"Tush!" cried Demdike; "my only regret will be that Uriel's slaughter is paid for by such a worthless life as thine."

"Then whoy tak' it?" demanded Hal. "'Specially whon yo'n lose your chilt by doing so."

"My child!" exclaimed Demdike, surprised. "How mean you, sirrah?"

"Ey mean this," replied Hal, coolly, "that if ey dee to-morrow mornin', your chilt dees too. Whon ey ondertook this job ey calkilated mey chances, an' tuk precautions eforehond. Your chilt's a hostage fo mey safety."

"Curses on thee and thy cunning," cried Demdike; "but I will not be outwitted by a hind like thee. I will have the child, and yet not be baulked of my revenge."

"Yo'n never ha' it, except os a breathless corpse, 'bowt mey consent," rejoined Hal.

"We shall see," cried Demdike, rushing forth, and bidding the guards look well to the prisoner.

But ere long he returned with a gloomy and disappointed expression of countenance, and again approaching the prisoner, said, "Thou hast spoken the truth. The infant is in the hands of some innocent being over whom I have no power."

"Ey towdee so, wizard," replied Hal, laughing. "Hoind os ey be, ey'm a match fo' thee,—ha! ha! Neaw, mey life agen t' chilt's. Win yo set me free?"

Demdike deliberated.

"Harkee, wizard," cried Hal; "if yo're hatching treason ey'n dun. T' sartunty o' revenge win sweeten mey last moments."

"Will you swear to deliver the child to me, unharmed, if I set you free?" asked Demdike.

"It's a bargain, wizard," rejoined Hal o' Nabs; "ey swear. Boh yo mun set me free furst, fo' ey winnaw tak your word."

Demdike turned away disdainfully, and, addressing the arquebussiers, said, "You behold this warrant, guard. The prisoner is committed to my custody. I will produce him on the morrow, or account for his absence to the Earl of Derby."

One of the arquebussiers examined the order, and vouching for its correctness, the others signified their assent to the arrangement, upon which Demdike motioned the prisoner to follow him, and quitted the chamber. No interruption was offered to Hal's egress, but he stopped within the court-yard, where Demdike awaited him, and unfastened the leathern thong that bound together his hands.

"Now go and bring the child to me," said the wizard.

"Nah, ey'st neaw bring it ye myself," rejoined Hal. "Ey knoas better nor that. Be at t' church porch i' half an hour, an' t' bantlin' shan be delivered to ye safe an' sound."

And without waiting for a reply, he ran off with great swiftness.

At the appointed time Demdike sought the church, and as he drew near it there issued from the porch a female, who hastily placing the child, wrapped in a mantle, in his arms, tarried for no speech from him, but instantly disappeared. Demdike, however, recognised in her the miller's daughter, Dorothy Croft.

Dawn came at last, after a long and weary night to many within and without the abbey. Everything betokened a dismal day. The atmosphere was damp, and oppressive to the spirits, while the raw cold sensibly affected the frame. All astir were filled with gloom and despondency, and secretly breathed a wish that the tragical business of the day were ended. The vast range of Pendle was obscured by clouds, and ere long the vapours descended into the valleys, and rain began to fall;

at first slightly, but afterwards in heavy continuous showers. Melancholy was the aspect of the abbey, and it required no stretch of imagination to fancy that the old structure was deploring the fate of its former ruler. To those impressed with the idea—and many there were who were so—the very stones of the convent church seemed dissolving into tears. The statues of the saints appeared to weep, and the great statue of Saint Gregory de Northbury over the porch seemed bowed down with grief. The grotesquely carved heads on the spouts grinned horribly at the abbot's destroyers, and spouted forth cascades of water as if with the intent of drowning them. So deluging and incessant were the showers, that it seemed, indeed, as if the abbey would be flooded. All the inequalities of ground within the great quadrangle of the cloisters looked like ponds, and the various water-spouts from the dormitory, the refectory, and the chapter-house, continuing to jet forth streams into the court below, the ambulatories were soon filled ankle-deep, and even the lower apartments, on which they opened, invaded.

Surcharged with moisture, the royal banner on the gate drooped and clung to the staff, as if it, too, shared in the general depression, or as if the sovereign authority it represented had given way. The countenances and deportment of the men harmonised with the weather; they moved about gloomily and despondently, their bright accoutrements sullied with the wet, and their buskins clogged with mire. A forlorn sight it was to watch the shivering sentinels on the walls; and yet more forlorn to see the groups of the abbot's old retainers gathering without, wrapped in their blue woollen cloaks, patiently enduring the drenching showers, and awaiting the last awful scene. But the saddest sight of all was on the hill, already described, called the Hole-houses. Here two other lesser gibbets had been erected during the night, one on either hand of the loftier instrument of justice, and the carpenters were yet employed in finishing their work, having been delayed by the badness of the weather. Half drowned by the torrents that fell upon them, the poor fellows were protected from interference with their disagreeable occupation by half-a-dozen well-mounted and well-armed troopers, and by as many halberdiers; and this company, completely exposed to the weather, suffered severely from wet and cold. The rain beat against the gallows, ran down its tall naked posts, and collected in pools at its feet. Attracted by some strange instinct, which seemed to give them a knowledge of the object of these terrible preparations, two ravens wheeled screaming round the fatal tree, and at length one of them settled on the cross-beam, and could with difficulty be dislodged by the shouts of the men, when it flew away, croaking hoarsely. Up this gentle hill, ordinarily so soft and beautiful, but now abhorrent as a Golgotha, in the eyes of the beholders, groups of rustics and monks had climbed over ground rendered slippery with moisture, and had gathered round the paling encircling the terrible apparatus, looking the images of despair and woe.

Even those within the abbey, and sheltered from the storm, shared the all-pervading despondency. The refectory looked dull and comfortless, and the logs on the hearth hissed and sputtered, and would not burn. Green wood had been brought instead of dry fuel by the drowsy henchman. The viands on the board provoked not the appetite, and the men emptied their cups of ale, yawned and stretched their arms, as if they would fain sleep an hour or two longer. The sense of discomfort was

heightened by the entrance of those whose term of watch had been relieved, and who cast their dripping cloaks on the floor, while two or three savage dogs, steaming with moisture, stretched their huge lengths before the sullen fire, and disputed all approach to it.

Within the great hall were already gathered the retainers of the Earl of Derby, but the nobleman himself had not appeared. Having passed the greater part of the night in conference with one person or another, and the abbot's flight having caused him much disquietude, though he did not hear of it till the fugitive was recovered, the earl would not seek his couch until within an hour of daybreak, and his attendants, considering the state of the weather, and that it yet wanted full two hours to the time appointed for the execution, did not think it needful to disturb him. Braddyll and Assheton, however, were up and ready, but despite their firmness of nerve, they yielded like the rest to the depressing influence of the weather, and began to have some misgivings as to their own share in the tragedy about to be enacted. The various gentlemen in attendance paced to and fro within the hall, holding but slight converse together, anxiously counting the minutes, for the time appeared to pass on with unwonted slowness, and ever and anon glancing through the diamond panes of the window at the rain pouring down steadily without, and coming back again hopeless of amendment in the weather.

If such were the disheartening influence of the day on those who had nothing to apprehend, what must its effect have been on the poor captives! Woeful indeed. The two monks suffered a complete prostration of spirit. All the resolution which Father Haydocke had displayed in his interview with the Earl of Derby failed him now, and he yielded to the agonies of despair. Father Eastgate was in little better condition, and gave vent to unavailing lamentations, instead of paying heed to the consolatory discourse of the monk who had been permitted to visit him.

The abbot was better sustained. Though greatly enfeebled by the occurrences of the night, yet in proportion as his bodily strength decreased, his mental energies rallied. Since the confession of his secret offence, and the conviction he had obtained that his supposed victim still lived, a weight seemed taken from his breast, and he had no longer any dread of death. Rather he looked to the speedy termination of existence with hopeful pleasure. He prepared himself as decently as the means afforded him permitted for his last appearance before the world, but refused all refreshment except a cup of water, and being left to himself, was praying fervently when a man was admitted into his cell. Thinking it might be the executioner come to summon him, he arose, and to his surprise beheld Hal o' Nabs. The countenance of the rustic was pale, but his bearing was determined.

"You here, my son," cried Paslew. "I hoped you had escaped."

"Ey'm i' nah dawnger, feayther abbut," replied Hal. "Ey'n getten leef to visit ye fo a minute only, so ey mun be brief. May yourself easy, ye shanna dee be't hongmon's honds."

"How, my son!" cried Paslew. "I understand you not."

"Yo'n onderstond me weel enough by-and-by," replied Hal. "Dunnah be feart whon ye see me next; an comfort yoursel' that whotever cums and goes, your death shall be avenged o' your warst foe."

Paslew would have sought some further explanation, but Hal stepped

quickly backwards, and striking his foot against the door, it was instantly opened by the guard, and he went forth.

Not long after this, the Earl of Derby entered the great hall, and his first inquiry was as to the safety of the prisoners. When satisfied of this, he looked forth, and shuddered at the dismal state of the weather. While he was addressing some remarks on this subject, and on its interference with the tragical exhibition about to take place, an officer entered the hall, followed by several persons of inferior condition, amongst whom was Hal o' Nabs, and marched up to the earl, while the others remained standing at a respectful distance.

"What news do you bring me, sir?" cried the earl, noticing the officer's evident uneasiness of manner. "Nothing hath happened to the prisoners? God's death! if it hath, you shall all answer for it with your bodies."

"Nothing hath happened to them, my lord," said the officer; "but——"

"But what?" interrupted the earl. "Out with it quickly."

"The executioner from Lancaster and his two aids have fled," replied the officer.

"Fled!" exclaimed the earl, stamping his foot with rage; "now, as I live, this is a device to delay the execution till some new attempt at rescue can be made. But it shall fail, if I string up the abbot myself. Death! can no other hangmen be found? ha!"

"Of a surety, my lord; but all have an aversion to the office, and hold it opprobrious, especially to put churchmen to death," replied the officer.

"Opprobrious or not, it must be done," replied the earl. "See that fitting persons are provided."

At this moment Hal o' Nabs stepped forward.

"Ey'm willing to onderake t' job, my lort, an to hong t' abbut, without fee or rewort," he said.

"Thou bear'st him a grudge, I suppose, good fellow," replied the earl, laughing at the rustic's uncouth appearance; "but thou seem'st a stout fellow, and one not likely to flinch, and may discharge the office as well as another. If no better man can be found, let him do it," he added to the officer.

"Ey humbly thonk your lortship," replied Hal, inwardly rejoicing at the success of his scheme. But his countenance fell when he perceived Demdike advance from behind the others.

"This man is not to be trusted, my lord," said Demdike, coming forward; "he has some mischievous design in making the request. So far from bearing enmity to the abbot, it was he who assisted him in his attempt to escape last night."

"What!" exclaimed the earl, "is this a new trick? Bring the fellow forward, that I may examine him."

But Hal was gone. Instantly divining Demdike's purpose, and seeing his chance lost, he mingled with the lookers-on, who covered his retreat. Nor could he be found when sought for by the guard.

"See you provide a substitute quickly, sir," cried the earl, angrily, to the officer.

"It is needless to take further trouble, my lord," replied Demdike; "I am come to offer myself as executioner."

"Thou!" exclaimed the earl.

"Ay," replied the other. "When I heard that the men from Lancaster were fled, I instantly knew that some scheme to frustrate the ends of justice was on foot, and I at once resolved to undertake the office myself rather than delay or risk should occur. What this man's aim was, who hath just offered himself, I partly guess, but it hath failed; and if your lordship will intrust the matter to me, I will answer that no further impediment shall arise, but that the sentence shall be fully carried out, and the law satisfied. Your lordship can trust me."

"I know it," replied the earl. "Be it as you will. It is now on the stroke of nine. At ten let all be in readiness to set out for Wiswall Hall. The rain may have ceased by that time, but no weather must stay you. Go forth with the new executioner, sir," he added to the officer, "and see all necessary preparations made."

And as Demdike bowed, and departed with the officer, the earl sat down with his retainers to break his fast.

Chapter IX.

WISWALL HALL.

Shortly before ten o'clock a numerous cortége, consisting of a troop of horse in their full equipments, a band of archers with their bows over their shoulders, and a long train of barefoot monks, who had been permitted to attend, set out from the abbey. Behind them came a varlet with a paper mitre on his head, and a lathen crosier in his hand, covered with a surcoat, on which was emblazoned, but torn and reversed, the arms of Paslew; argent, a fess between three mullets, sable, pierced of the field, a crescent for difference. After him came another varlet bearing a banner, on which was painted a grotesque figure in a half-military, half-monastic garb, representing the "Earl of Poverty," with this distich beneath it—

> Priest and warrior—rich and poor,
> He shall be hanged at his own door.

Next followed a tumbrel, drawn by two horses, in which sat the abbot alone, the two other prisoners being kept back for the present. Then came Demdike, in a leathern jerkin and blood-red hose, fitting closely to his sinewy limbs, and wrapped in a houppeland of the same colour as the hose, with a coil of rope round his neck. He walked between two ill-favoured personages habited in black, whom he had chosen as assistants. A band of halberdiers brought up the rear. The procession moved slowly along; the passing-bell tolling each minute, and a muffled drum sounding hollowly at intervals.

Shortly before the procession started the rain ceased, but the air felt damp and chill, and the roads were inundated. Passing out at the north-eastern gateway, the gloomy train skirted the south side of the convent church, and went on in the direction of the village of Whalley. When near the east end of the holy edifice, the abbot beheld two coffins borne along, and, on inquiry, learnt that they contained the bodies of Bess Demdike and Cuthbert Ashbead, who were about to be interred in the cemetery. At this moment his eye for the first time encountered that of his implacable foe, and he then discovered that he was to serve as his executioner. At first Paslew felt much trouble at this thought, but the

feeling quickly passed away. On reaching Whalley, every door was found closed, and every window shut; so that the spectacle was lost upon the inhabitants; and after a brief halt, the cavalcade set out for Wiswall Hall.

Sprung from an ancient family residing in the neighbourhood of Whalley, Abbot Paslew was the second son of Francis Paslew of Wiswall Hall, a great gloomy stone mansion, situated at the foot of the south-western side of Pendle Hill, where his brother Francis still resided. Of a cold and cautious character, Francis Paslew, second of the name, held aloof from the insurrection, and when his brother was arrested he wholly abandoned him. Still the owner of Wiswall had not altogether escaped suspicion, and it was probably as much with the view of degrading him as of adding to the abbot's punishment, that the latter was taken to the hall on the morning of his execution. Be this as it may, the cortége toiled thither through roads bad in the best of seasons, but now, since the heavy rain, scarcely passable; and it arrived there in about half an hour, and drew up on the broad green lawn. Window and door of the hall were closed; no smoke issued from the heavy pile of chimneys; and to all outward seeming the place was utterly deserted. In answer to inquiries, it appeared that Francis Paslew had departed for Northumberland on the previous day, taking all his household with him.

In earlier years a quarrel having occurred between the haughty abbot and the churlish Francis, the brothers rarely met, whence it chanced that John Paslew had seldom visited the place of his birth of late, though lying so near to the abbey, and, indeed, forming part of its ancient dependencies. It was sad to view it now, and yet the house, gloomy as it was, recalled seasons with which, though they might awaken regret, no guilty associations were connected. Dark was the hall, and desolate, but on the fine old trees around it the rooks were settling, and their loud cawings pleased him, and excited gentle emotions. For a few moments he grew young again, and forgot why he was there. Fondly surveying the house, the terraced garden, in which, as a boy, he had so often strayed, and the park beyond it, where he had chased the deer, his gaze rose to the cloudy heights of Pendle, springing immediately behind the mansion, and up which he had frequently climbed. The flood-gates of memory were opened at once, and a whole tide of long-buried feelings rushed upon his heart.

From this half-painful, half-pleasurable retrospect he was aroused by the loud blast of a trumpet, thrice blown. A recapitulation of his offences, together with his sentence, was read by a herald, after which the reversed blazonry was fastened upon the door of the hall, just below a stone escutcheon, on which was carved the arms of the family; while the paper mitre was torn and trampled under foot, the lathen crosier broken in twain, and the scurril banner hacked in pieces.

While this degrading act was performed, a man in a miller's white garb, with the hood drawn over his face, forced his way towards the tumbrel, and while the attention of the guard was otherwise engaged, whispered in Paslew's ear,

"Ey han failed i' mey scheme, feayther abbut, boh rest assured ey'n avenge you. Demdike shan ha' mey Sheffield thwittle i' his heart 'efore he's a day older."

"The wizard has a charm against steel, my son, and indeed is proof against all weapons forged by men," replied Paslew, who recognised the

voice of Hal o' Nabs, and hoped by this assertion to divert him from his purpose.

"Ha! say yo so, feayther abbut?" cried Hal; "then ey'n reach him wi' summot sacred." And he disappeared.

At this moment word was given to return, and in half an hour the cavalcade arrived at the abbey in the same order it had left it.

Though the rain had ceased, heavy clouds still hung overhead, threatening another deluge, and the aspect of the abbey remained gloomy as ever. The bell continued to toll; drums were beaten; and trumpets sounded from the outer and inner gateway, and from the three quadrangles. The cavalcade drew up in front of the great northern entrance; and its return being announced within, the two other captives were brought forth, each fastened upon a hurdle, harnessed to a stout horse. They looked dead already, so ghastly was the hue of their cheeks.

The abbot's turn came next. Another hurdle was brought forward, and Demdike advanced to the tumbrel. But Paslew recoiled from his touch, and sprang to the ground unaided. He was then laid on his back upon the hurdle, and his hands and feet were bound fast with ropes to the twisted timbers. While this painful task was roughly performed by the wizard's two ill-favoured assistants, the crowd of rustics who looked on murmured and exhibited such strong tokens of displeasure, that the guard thought it prudent to keep them off with their halberts. But when all was done, Demdike motioned to a man standing behind him, to advance, and the person who was wrapped in a russet cloak complied, drew forth an infant, and held it in such way that the abbot could see it. Paslew understood what was meant, but he uttered not a word. Demdike then knelt down beside him, as if ascertaining the security of the cords, and whispered in his ear—

"Recal thy malediction, and my dagger shall save thee from the last indignity!"

"Never," replied Paslew; "the curse is irrevocable. But I would not recal it if I could. As I have said, thy child shall be a witch, and the mother of witches—but all shall be swept off—all!"

"Hell's torments seize thee!" cried the wizard, furiously.

"Nay, thou hast done thy worst to me," rejoined Paslew, meekly; "thou canst not harm me beyond the grave. Look to thyself, for even as thou speakest, thy child is taken from thee."

And so it was. While Demdike knelt beside Paslew, a hand was put forth, and, before the man who had custody of the infant could prevent it, his little charge was snatched from him. This the abbot saw, though the wizard perceived it not. The latter instantly sprang to his feet.

"Where is the child?" he demanded of the fellow in the russet cloak.

"It was taken from me by yon tall man who is disappearing through the gateway," replied the other, in great trepidation.

"Ha! *he* here!" exclaimed Demdike, regarding the Dark Figure with a look of despair. "It is gone from me for ever!"

"Ay, for ever!" echoed the abbot, solemnly.

"But revenge is still left me—revenge!" cried Demdike, with an infuriated gesture.

"Then glut thyself with it speedily," replied the abbot, "for thy time here is short."

"I care not if it be," replied Demdike; "I shall live long enough if I survive thee."

Chapter X.

THE HOLEHOUSES.

At this moment the blast of a trumpet resounded from the gateway, and the Earl of Derby, with the sheriff on his right hand, and Assheton on the left, and mounted on a richly-caparisoned charger, rode forth. He was preceded by four javelin-men, and followed by two heralds in their tabards.

To doleful tolling of bells—to solemn music—to plaintive hymn chanted by monks—to roll of muffled drum at intervals—the sad cortége set forth. Loud cries from the bystanders marked its departure, and some of them followed it, but many turned away, unable to endure the sight of horror about to ensue. Amongst those who went on was Hal o' Nabs, but he took care to keep out of the way of the guard, though he was little likely to be recognised, owing to his disguise.

Despite the miserable state of the weather, a great multitude was assembled at the place of execution, and they watched the approaching cavalcade with moody curiosity. To prevent disturbance, arquebussiers were stationed in parties here and there, and a clear course for the cortége was preserved by two lines of halberdiers with crossed pikes. But notwithstanding this, much difficulty was experienced in mounting the hill. Rendered slippery by the wet, and yet more so by the trampling of the crowd, the road was so bad in places that the horses could scarcely drag the hurdles up it, and more than one delay occurred. The stoppages were always denounced by groans, yells, and hootings from the mob, and these, neither the menaces of the Earl of Derby, nor the active measures of the guard, could repress.

At length, however, the cavalcade reached its destination. Then the crowd struggled forward, and settled into a dense compact ring round the circular railing enclosing the place of execution, within which were drawn up the Earl of Derby, the sheriff, Assheton, and the principal gentlemen, together with Demdike and his assistants; the guard forming a circle three deep round them.

Paslew was first unloosed, and when he stood up, he found Father Smith, the late prior, beside him, and tenderly embraced him.

"Be of good courage, father abbot," said the prior; "a few moments, and you will be numbered with the just."

"My hope is in the infinite mercy of Heaven, father," replied Paslew, sighing deeply. "Pray for me at the last."

"Doubt it not," returned the prior, fervently. "I will pray for you now and ever."

Meanwhile, the bonds of the two other captives were unfastened, but they were found wholly unable to stand without support. A lofty ladder had been placed against the central scaffold, and up this Demdike, having cast off his houppeland, mounted and adjusted the rope. His tall gaunt figure fully displayed in his tight-fitting red garb made him look like a hideous scarecrow. His appearance was greeted by the mob with a perfect hurricane of indignant outcries and yells. But he heeded them not, but calmly pursued his task. Above him wheeled the two ravens, who had never quitted the place since daybreak, uttering their discordant cries.

When all was done, he descended a few steps, and taking a black hood from his girdle to place over the head of his victim, called out in a voice which had little human in its tone, "I wait for you, John Paslew."

"Are you ready, Paslew?" demanded the Earl of Derby.

"I am, my lord," replied the abbot. And embracing the prior for the last time, he added, "*Vale, carissime frater, in æternum vale! et Dominus tecum sit in ultionem inimicorum nostrorum!*"

"It is the king's pleasure that you say not a word in your justification to the mob, Paslew," observed the earl.

"I had no such intention, my lord," replied the abbot.

"Then tarry no longer," said the earl; "if you need aid, you shall have it."

"I require none," replied Paslew, resolutely.

With this he mounted the ladder, with as much firmness and dignity as if ascending the steps of a tribune.

Hitherto, nothing but yells and angry outcries had stunned the ears of the lookers-on, and several missives had been hurled at Demdike, some of which took effect, though without occasioning him discomfiture; but when the abbot appeared above the heads of the guard, the tumult instantly subsided, and profound silence ensued. Not a breath was drawn by the spectators. The ravens alone continued their ominous croaking.

Hal o' Nabs, who stood on the outskirts of the ring, saw thus far, but he could bear it no longer, and rushed down the hill. Just as he reached the level ground, a culverin was fired from the gateway, and the next moment a loud wailing cry bursting from the mob told that the abbot was launched into eternity.

Hal would not look back, but went slowly on, and presently afterwards other horrid sounds dinned in his ears, telling that all was over with the two other sufferers. Sickened and faint, he leaned against a wall for support. How long he continued thus, he knew not, but he heard the cavalcade coming down the hill, and saw the Earl of Derby and his attendants ride past. Glancing towards the place of execution, Hal then perceived that the abbot had been cut down, and rousing himself he joined the crowd now rushing towards the gate, and ascertained that the body of Paslew was to be taken to the convent church, and deposited there till orders were to be given respecting its interment. He learnt, also, that the removal of the corpse was intrusted to Demdike. Fired by this intelligence, and suddenly conceiving a wild project of vengeance, founded upon what he had heard from the abbot of the wizard being proof against weapons forged by men, he hurried to the church, entered it, the door being thrown open, and rushing up to the gallery, contrived to get out through a window upon the top of the porch, where he secreted himself behind the great stone statue of Saint Gregory.

The information he had obtained proved correct. Ere long a mournful train approached the church, and a bier was set down before the porch. A black hood covered the face of the dead, but the vestments showed that it was the body of Paslew.

At the head of the bearers was Demdike, and when the body was set down he advanced towards it, and, removing the hood, gazed at the livid and distorted features.

"At length I am fully avenged," he said.

"And Abbot Paslew, also," cried a voice above him.

Demdike looked up, but the look was his last, for the ponderous statue of Saint Gregory de Northbury, launched from its pedestal, fell upon his head, and crushed him to the ground. A mangled and breathless mass was taken from beneath the image, and the hands and visage of Paslew were found spotted with blood dashed from the gory carcase. The author of the wizard's destruction was suspected, but never found, nor was it positively known who had done the deed till years after, when Hal o' Nabs, who meanwhile had married pretty Dorothy Croft, and had been blessed by numerous offspring in the union, made his last confession, and then he exhibited no remarkable or becoming penitence for the act, neither was he refused absolution.

Thus it came to pass that the abbot and his enemy perished together. The mutilated remains of the wizard were placed in a shell, and huddled into the grave where his wife had that morning been laid. But no prayer was said over him. And the superstitious believed that the body was carried off that very night by the Fiend, and taken to a witch's sabbath in the ruined tower on Rimington Moor. Certain it was, that the unhallowed grave was disturbed. The body of Paslew was decently interred in the north aisle of the parish church of Whalley, beneath a stone with a Gothic cross sculptured upon it, and bearing the piteous inscription—

"Miserere mei."

But in the belief of the vulgar the abbot did not rest tranquilly. For many years afterwards a white-robed monastic figure was seen to flit along the cloisters, pass out at the gate, and disappear with a wailing cry over the Holehouses. And the same ghostly figure was often seen to glide through the corridor in the abbot's lodging, and vanish at the door of the chamber leading to the little oratory. Thus Whalley Abbey was supposed to be haunted, and few liked to wander through its deserted cloisters or ruined church after dark. The abbot's tragical end was thus recorded:—

Johannes Paslew: Capitale Affectus Supplicio.

12° Mensis Martii, 1537.

As to the infant upon whom the abbot's malediction fell, it was reserved for the dark destinies shadowed forth in the dread anathema he had uttered: to the development of which the tragic drama about to follow is devoted, and to which the fate of Abbot Paslew forms a necessary and fitting prologue. Thus far the veil of the Future may be drawn aside. That infant and her progeny became the LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

THE FREISCHARLER AND HIS GUN.*

(VOLKS LIED.)

BY CAROLINE DE CRESPIGNY.

FREISCHARLER.

"THEY never shall possess thee,
Till cold this hand in death,
And patriot pæans bless thee,
And Victory's laurels wreathe."

GUN.

"Why dost so firmly clench me,
My trusty friend, and tried?"

FREISCHARLER.

"Alas! and they would wrench me
From thy protecting side."

GUN.

"Thinkest thou they wish to have me
With this old form I wear?"

FREISCHARLER.

"I well know why they crave thee,
'Tis not from love—but fear.

"Thou art a freeman's treasure,—
Hope—comfort—joy—delight;
I prize thee beyond measure—"

GUN.

"Then clasp me day and night."

FREISCHARLER.

"Thy voice to me is dearer,
Thy jug-jug on my ear,
Sounds musically clearer
Than nightingales to hear.

"Ah! sinks my roof-tree under!
They waste with sword and flame;"

GUN.

"But I reply in thunder,
With thine unerring aim."

FREISCHARLER.

"Hark! peals on peals are ringing,
My brothers round me fall;"

GUN.

"But I to tyrants winging,
A death in every ball."

FREISCHARLER.

"Soon victory's wreath shall bind thee—
What presage this of ill?
My eyes grow dim,—"

GUN.

"Then wind me
Still closer—closer still."

FREISCHARLER.

"Amid the dead and dying,
On liberty's battle-field,
Together now we're lying,—"

GUN.

"Brave patriot! never yield."

FREISCHARLER.

"No hireling slave shall hold thee,
With life we will not part."

GUN.

"Then like a bride enfold me,
And press me to your heart.

"Now let the foe possess me,
Thou sleepest cold in death,
But freedom's sons shall bless thee,
Their tears be my best wreath."

* See "Scwert Lied;" or, Sword Song, by Körner.

RATTLIN THE REEFER'S DREAM.

A Tough but True Yarn.

BY ONE OF RATTLIN'S OLD SHIPMATES.

It was about the middle of August, 18—, that the *Old Lucifer* was cruising in the Monar Passage, a strait about forty miles wide, which separates the eastern end of St. Domingo from the island of Porto Rico. I was "middy" of the morning watch: it had been dead calm all night, but the gentle trade-wind was rising with the rising sun, and morning was glorious with the magic gilding of a tropical sky. Some time after eight bells,* when Ned Rattlin, who was never very punctual or methodical in any of his movements, came on deck to relieve me, and I was about to hurry down to my breakfast of warm skilligalee, or, as our old French negro, who served as midshipmen's steward and maid-of-all-work, with true French tact for murdering the king's English, called it, "giggeragee," Ralph seized me by the collar of my jacket, crying,

"Avast! Careless, my boy; you really must not make sail for the cockpit till you have heard the horrid dream which I had last night or this morning, for I dreamt it twice over, and cannot get it out of my head. I must tell it to some one, and you are the only one that I dare tell it to; I should be so confoundedly laughed at by the *servum pocus* of the cockpit; but you and I know each other, and have some pursuits and feelings in common. We have our day-dreams and our night-dreams, and we know that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of a midshipman's berth."

Now, had not Ralph seized hold of me by the lappel of my jacket, as before said, I should certainly have cut and run; for a reefer of sixteen, who is just relieved from the morning-watch, which he has kept for four hours, from four o'clock in the morning, and who has taken a cold bath in the wash-deck tub, is not likely to be in a humour to let his breakfast of cocoa or skilligalee grow cold. But, with the powerful grip of Ralph's shoulder-of-mutton fist on my collar, there was no chance of escape without tearing my jacket from clue to earring, which I felt that I could not afford to do; for, as I have before remarked, Ralph Rattlin was my senior by two years at least, and overtopped me in height by a foot, or something near it. I therefore made a virtue of necessity, and said,

"Well, Jemmy, if you'll promise not to keep me long, and allow me, first, to run down below and tell old Dom to keep my burgoo† warm, I'll return and hear your wonderful dream, though I fancy it's all gammon, and only manufactured to try the capacity of my swallow; because you know that, like yourself, I have a bit of hankering after the marvellous, and, as the negro Methodist said of the prophet Jonah, am 'a tellible

* Time is regulated on board a king's ship by a half-hour glass, which is placed in the binnacle, in charge of the quartermaster of the watch on deck, and who, when he turns the glass, passes the word forward to strike the bell, which, in a man-of-war, is hung to the main-bitts, just over the main-hatchway, and where it is consequently heard with facility all over the ship.

† Burgoo, or skilligalee, is the sea-term for what in Scotland is called "parritch," and in Ireland "stirabout," namely, oatmeal boiled in water.

fellow for fish,' though I doubt whether, like him, I could quite swallow a whale."

"Well, then, make sail, you little flibbertigibbet, and make haste back, that's a good fellow."

The above elegant soubriquet he generally favoured me with, when, in Yankee parlance, I had "ryled" him and got his "dander up," as was always the case when he was called Jemmy Caster; he being but too conscious that his long loose figure and shambling gait bore, at that time, no small resemblance to those of a waister of that name, though he afterwards became a remarkably fine, handsome man, bearing a striking resemblance, not without sufficient reason, to King George the Fourth.

In a few minutes I had made arrangements with old Dominique for the safe custody of my breakfast, and was again pacing the lee side of the quarter-deck, by the side of my gigantic messmate.

"And now, my dear Careless," said he, with unusual gravity, "if you can be serious for a few minutes, I will relate to you this infernal dream, which so preys upon my spirits that I do not feel like myself this morning, and must unburden my mind. I dreamt, then, that I was on the second dog-watch, as you know I shall be this evening; it was between seven and eight bells, the night pitch-dark, with the wind blowing fresh from the north-east, the ship under double-reefed topsails, and foresail close hauled on the starboard tack, running at the rate of five knots, as I had found upon heaving the log. Suddenly the sea became like one sheet of flame; its appearance was awfully grand; the head of every wave, as it curled over and broke, diffused itself in broad streaks and flashes of blue and white flame; and I involuntarily repeated to myself the two lines of that singular, soul-freezing rhapsody, the 'Ancient Mariner,' which, though descriptive of a very different state of the ocean from that now presented to my imagination, I felt to be most applicable to what I saw before me—

> The water, like a witch's oils,
> Burnt green, and blue, and white;

and then, referring to the two preceding lines of the stanza—

> About, about, in reel and rout,
> The death-fires danced at night.

For that strangely wild and beautiful poem had taken a powerful hold on my sleeping fancy. I asked myself, with a shudder, Can there be 'death-fires?' And it seemed that the question, uttered half-aloud, had no sooner passed my lips, than it received its answer in a most strange and fearful manner; for a voice, like no human voice that I ever yet heard, shrieked out, in a tone of horror and distress, that made my blood run cold, 'Ship a-hoy—ship a-hoy!' I turned towards the lee quarter, whence the voice came; and, jumping on a carronade-slide, I saw the body of a man appearing out of the sea, from the waist upwards, of gigantic size, and of most forbidding—and at the same time woeful—countenance. His body appeared covered with scales, like that of a fish, which reflected the ghastly phosphoric light of the waters in radiating hues of green and gold, and purple and violet. His ample jaws, which opened from ear to ear, and which were furnished with a triple row of saw-shaped teeth, like those of a shark, were fringed with a thick curled beard and moustache, of

pale sea-green, which fell in wavy masses, mingling with long elf-locks of the same sickly hue, over his broad breast and shoulders; his deep-sunk eyes flashed out with a strange unearthly light from beneath thick, overhanging eyebrows of that self-same sea-green hue, and his head was surrounded and surmounted with a waving diadem of 'green, and blue, and white' flames, flashing upwards, and radiating sideways, and curling over their waving tops, so as to ape the exact form of ostrich feathers. Awful as the figure was, and though it made my flesh creep, yet, dreaming as I was, I felt conscious that there was something of the ridiculous attached to the *bizarrerie* of its appearance. You know my vein, Careless, and will give me credit for a true exposition of my feelings, when I tell you that, though in a most awful funk, I could not help adopting the words of *Trinculo*, and asking myself, half-aloud,

What have we here—a man or a fish?

I had not, till that moment, noticed the quartermaster of the watch, a fine old weather-beaten seaman, who stood close to my side, and was, like myself, attentively watching the movements of the strange demon-like merman, who continued to follow the ship within a few fathoms of the lee quarter-galley, with a continual bowing or nodding motion of the head, which caused his plumes of livid flame to flash and corruscate, so that, to my eyes, they appeared to assume various forms of terror, as of 'fiery flying serpents,' entwining his temples and thence shooting upwards, hissing and protruding their forked tongues, and lashing the air with their wings and tails of flame; and then, again, they subsided as before into the form of gracefully-curling ostrich-plumes; meanwhile he kept opening his terrific jaws, from which issued a thin blue luminous vapour, as if in act to speak, but uttered no audible sound, except that every now and then he would wring his huge hands, which appeared to be webbed to the second joint of the fingers, like the feet of a water-fowl, and furnished with long, crooked nails like an eagle's claws, and utter a wailing shriek, so like the cry of a drowning man, that it nearly drove me mad to hear it, and seemed to freeze my very blood in my veins. Whether old Bitts, the quartermaster, had really heard me quote the words of *Trinculo*, or whether, as all things seem to work by supernatural influences in dreams, he had defined my question by intuition, I know not, but he answered me at once.

"'No, sir; believe an old sailor, that 'ere critter is neither man nor fish; it is somebody far more terrible-like, and one that few living sailors have ever set eyes on, though, mayhap, I may have seen him before; mayhap, d'ye see, I can't tell when nor where, nor whether it were sleeping or waking; howsomedever, be that as it will, I knows him well enough, for sure that 'ere's old Davy himself—old Davy Jones—he's come for some poor fellow's soul on board this here ship; and if you wants to get rid of him, you'd better go down at once, and call the captain up, that he may tell him to take what he wants and be off; for, till that's done, he'll keep alongside the ship, and if he's kept too long waiting, there's no saying but he may send a hurricane which may sweep the *Old Lucifer*, and all her officers and crew, away down into his locker.'

"This hint was no sooner given, than I thought I went down into the captain's cabin, where I found Captain Dure seated at the cabin-table, just

under the swinging lamp, as pale as death, and trembling from head to foot like an aspen-leaf.

"'Please, sir,' I said, touching my hat, as in duty bound, 'Davy Jones has come alongside, and is waiting for somebody's soul; will you please to come on deck, and tell him to take what he wants?'

"'I know it,' said the captain, who seemed utterly unnerved with terror, while the presence of the unearthly visitant seemed to

> —— harrow up his soul, freeze his young blood;
> Make his two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
> *His* knotted and combined locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand on end
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

"'I had a glimpse of him,' continued he, 'out of the quarter-gallery window, and that's enough for me. Let the officer of the watch, or the first lieutenant, tell him to take what he wants, and get rid of him.'

"Now, it seemed to me in my dream that I was dreadfully annoyed at the conduct of the captain in shrinking in such a dastardly manner from his duty; for, from the moment that Bitts had informed me who the stranger was and what he required, I had gone down and reported his advent to the skipper, with as much coolness and unconcern as I should have done the coming alongside of the admiral or any other great personage, and all my terror seemed, for the time, to have vanished as soon as the strange vision became connected with matters of routine or ship's duty. I, therefore, addressed the captain again, as it seemed to me, in a tone more authoritative than respectful: 'But, sir, you must come on deck; for old Bill Bitts says that Davy Jones will hearken to nobody but the captain or commander of a ship for the time being, and he knows Davy of old; and says, that if you don't come up on deck soon and let him go, the old fellow will send a hurricane that will blow the *Old Lucifer* out of the water, and that we shall find ourselves all, men and officers, down in Davy Jones's locker before you can say Jack Robinson. And I can tell you, sir, that the sky looks very ugly to windward."

"'Well, Ralph, my boy!' said the captain, apparently quite convinced by my eloquent speech, which seemed to go down capitally in my dream, though I guess I should soon be looking out for squalls at the main-top-gallant-mast head, if I were to venture to address such a cavalier harangue to the skipper in waking earnest. 'Well, Ralph, my boy! give me your arm, and we'll go on deck, and give old Davy his due, since it must be so.' And with my assistance the captain mounted the companion-ladder, still trembling in every limb.

"As soon as we came on deck, I led him over to the lee side of the quarter-deck, and begged him to mount the carronade slide, and give his unwelcome visitor the *congé d'élire*, for which he seemed waiting, still bowing his head, waving his fiery plumes, and mopping and mowing, and showing his treble row of teeth, as before. At the sight of the frightful demon, the captain seemed more dead than alive, and ready to fall from the gun-carriage, on which I was obliged to support him; he, however, plucked up courage to shriek out, in a voice that trembled with agitation, 'Whoever, or whatever, you are, take what you want, and begone;' and having said so, he sank powerless into my arms; upon which the creature

uttered one of its strange shrilling shrieks as of a drowning man, but which seemed mingled with a sort of shrill demoniac laughter, and disappeared below the waves—the waving plumes of his singular head-gear flashing up half-mast high as he sank out of sight. At the same moment, my eyes were somehow mysteriously directed from it, and I saw Jacob Fell, the forecastle-man, fall dead into the arms of one of his watch-mates, he, whom we call Cadaverous Jack, and whom you christened the Ancient Mariner, because you said he went about his duty looking so miserable, holding his head down on one side, as if he always felt the weight of the murdered albatross hanging about his neck. Immediately a heavy squall threw the ship on her beam-ends, and I awoke;"—which was the singular dream related to me by my quondam friend and shipmate, with a gravity quite unusual with him, except when he wanted to play upon the credulity of some of us youngsters, when he used to assume the gravest possible countenance, though I could always, in these cases, discern the lurking devil in his eyes. In this case, however, I could discover no such appearance of fun and frolic; his looks were, on the contrary, perfectly serious, and even allied to sadness, in spite of the bravado with which he had assumed his usual careless levity of manner in certain parts of his narration. I determined, however, not to let him have the laugh against me, and therefore said, "Come, come, Jemmy, you should tell that dream to the marines; the sailors can't bolt it; it's rather too tough. We all of us know that you are always dreaming, but you can't catch old birds with such chaff. I am too old a sea-dog, and have sailed over too many leagues of blue water to bite at such gammon." I prided myself much on being Ralph's senior in the service by a couple of years or so, and felt indignant that he should think of treating me as a youngster, because he had about the same advantage of me in age. He, however, affirmed, in the most solemn manner, that it was an actual *bonâ-fide* dream, and that it had been reiterated on his falling asleep again, though in broken and disjointed patches, sometimes one part, sometimes another, of the previous vision being presented to his sleepy fancy; but there was always this horrible merman, with his shark's jaws and his flaming tiara, and poor Jacob Fell lying dead in his messmate's arms. But methinks I hear some nautical reader exclaim, "All stuff!" who ever heard of two reefers telling their dreams, and chattering on the sacred precincts of the quarter-deck of one of her Majesty's frigates, like a guinea-pig and an embryo cadet on the quarter-deck of a Bengal trader? Pardon, my noble sea-*hossifer*, but you must remember that I have already told you that the *Old Lucifer* was not the crack frigate—not the *Eos*, six-and-thirty, but only a small frigate; and that, although she was blessed with a real martinet of a first-lieutenant, yet, in point of discipline, she was like most jackass frigates and sloops of war, *et hoc genus omne*, little better than a privateer; besides, our Portuguese supernumerary lieutenant was the officer of the watch, and Ralph had completely got the weather-gage of him, and could do what he liked with the "paviour."* However, the dream was told me by Ralph nearly in the very words in which I have given it, though, perhaps, not all on deck, for the subject was renewed over our allowance of grog in the midshipmen's berth after

* See "Rattlin the Reefer," vol. i., *passim*.

dinner, for nothing could drive it out of Rattlin's head, and he was all that day singularly silent and *distrait* on all other subjects. That evening I had the first dog-watch; and when Rattlin came on deck at six o'clock to relieve me, the sun was setting in a red and angry-looking sky, and there was every symptom of a squally night.

"Well, Percy," he said, "this sunset reminds me of my dream. I really think old Davy will be among us before my watch is out."

"Very well, Jemmy, I'll come on deck at seven-bells and see," I replied, as I ran down the companion for an hour's snooze, for, as my nautical readers will be aware, I had the middle watch. Mindful of my promise, as soon as I heard seven-bells struck, I roused myself from the locker on which I had stretched myself and went on deck, and I was immediately struck with the perfect coincidence of the weather, and all the accessories to those described by Rattlin in his dream. The ship had just been put about, and was now close hauled on the starboard tack; the night pitch dark, the breeze freshening from the north-east, and the sea beginning to assume that luminous appearance so frequently observable under a dark sky and with a fresh breeze, but which, though generally attributed to myriads of luminous animalculæ, has never yet been fully and satisfactorily accounted for. I joined my friend Rattlin, and said to him, in a low tone, "This looks, indeed, like your dream."

"Yes," he answered, looking very pale and nervous; "it does, indeed. I don't know what to make of it. Davy Jones will certainly lay hold of some of us to-night."

At this moment the first-lieutenant came on deck, followed by the captain, whose sallow countenance, as he stood abaft the binnacle, and the light fell on his face, looked rather more ghastly than usual.

"I think, Mr. Silva," said the former, addressing the officer of the watch, "we had better take another reef in the topsails; it looks very squally to windward; it's drawing near to eight-bells, so we'll turn the hands up at once."

"Mr. Rattlin," said Silva, "all hands reef topsails."

"Boatswain's-mate," bawled out Rattlin, going forward on to the weather gangway, "turn the hands up to reef topsails."

"Ay, ay, sir;" and immediately his silver call was between his lips, and after blowing a shrill prelude, his hoarse voice was heard proclaiming, "All hands reef topsails, ahoy," which was re-echoed from the main-deck by the call and voice of the boatswain's-mate of the watch below, and, finally, by those of the boatswain himself, as the men came tumbling up the fore and main hatchways, and were soon seen scampering up the rigging, or making the best of their way to their various stations. In less than five minutes the topsails were double-reefed, and the ship again dashing the spray from her bows. It being now so near the time for relieving the watch, the crew, with the exception of the idlers, all remained on deck, and the topmen scattered in groups about the gangways and forecastle.

All at once the sky grew blacker than before, the breeze freshened, and the surface of the sea became like one sheet of pale blue and white flame.

"Now, Careless," whispered Rattlin, actually trembling with excitement, "my dream to the life!"

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when such a shriek as I never heard before or since seemed to come out of the very depths of the ocean, close under the ship's counter on the lee quarter. Every one rushed to the lee gangway, or jumped on the quarter-deck guns, to look in the direction from whence the sound came; but nothing could be seen. Once more that doleful cry arose, and it seemed now rather more distant from the ship, and then it ceased for ever.

"A man overboard!" cried the first-lieutenant, who seemed the first to recover his senses, seizing a grating of the companion-hatchway, and flinging it over the lee-bulwark, while the lieutenant of the watch did the same with its fellow. "Down with helm, and heave her all aback—let go the lee braces—lay the main-topsail to the mast—square away the after-yards, my boys—lower the jolly-boat—jump into her some of ye, and cast off her fastenings."

This latter command had, however, been obeyed ere it was issued, for the captain of the mizen-top and myself had jumped into the boat, where we were soon joined by three other mizen-top-men, and had her all clear for lowering. Two other seamen stood with the boat's tackle-falls in their hands.

"Lower away," cried I; and down we went.

During her descent, I had shipped the rudder, and we were soon pulling away to leeward. In vain we pulled about for more than an hour in the short, tumbling sea, which scintillated as it broke around us, and shed a ghastly hue on our anxious countenances, while the

> Elfish light
> Fell off in hoary flakes

from the blades of our oars at every dip as they rose again from the water. At length the stentorian voice of the first-lieutenant hailed us to come on board, and we gave up our hopeless search, bringing with us nothing but one of the gratings and the life-buoy, which had been thrown overboard to support the drowning man, had he been fortunate enough to lay hold on one or the other of them. Upon passing the word forward to inquire whether any of the ship's company were missing, it was found that Jacob Fell, the forecastle-man, had not been seen since he had laid out with one of his watch-mates to stow the jib, which was hauled down when the top-sails were reefed; the other man had left him out on the jib-boom, whence he must have fallen overboard; and it was supposed, from his thrilling and unearthly shriek, that he had been seized by a shark, as that part of the Carribean Sea is peculiarly infested by those voracious creatures; and thus was most singularly accomplished my shipmate Rattlin's Dream.

THE ROMANCE OF REALITY.

BEING THE SECOND CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day;
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by-and-by a cloud takes all away!

Shakspeare.

In the course of the experience of the writer of these papers, some friendships, lasting and esteemed, have been made through a first meeting and acquaintance in a stage-coach. My intimacy with Mr. Elton, of ——, so originated. A long journey together, by one of the well-appointed four-in-hands of the day, was the commencement of our acquaintance, followed by a warm friendship, which has, alas! recently terminated with his death. Incidental to our conversation, an animated discussion, as we approached the termination of our journey, upon a passage in the works of a mutually-esteemed writer, led to an invitation to my fellow-passenger's library, with the view of our referring together to the passage in question, which reference was to be followed by an adjournment to his supper-table. I accepted the invitation, and the same evening was introduced to my entertainer's little family circle, consisting of his daughter, a young lady of eighteen, and his son, who at the period of my introduction had, like myself, then seen some four-and-twenty summers.

The commencement of a delightful series was that evening to me. Between myself and the son of my coach companion an intimacy was then formed, which after years have ripened into the warmest of friendships, and which, it is my happiness to believe, will know no termination but with life. Never lived a more united, a more happy family, than the Eltons. The old gentleman, who was a retired merchant and a widower, was passionately attached to his children, and the warmth of his affection was by them reciprocated in a manner truly delightful to behold.

Edith Elton was very beautiful! I am writing no fiction, nor drawing from the ideal creations of the brain, in introducing this truly lovely girl to the reader. She was very delicate, but there was a vivacity and intelligence in her countenance, an expression of tenderness in her blue eyes, and a nobleness in the contour of her finely-chiselled features, which no description can possibly convey. When I add that she was highly accomplished, possessed an exquisite taste, and sang delightfully, it will not appear surprising that, of the many who visited Thorn Cottage—the name of Mr. Elton's residence,—there were some who were almost worshippers of the very ground on which she stood.

Grattan Elton, her brother, I found a fine-spirited young fellow—a man after my own heart—intelligent, good-humoured, and manly; possessing a soul that was above a mean action, a nice sense of honour, and a thorough absence of puppyism. His failings might be said to be a hasty temperament and great impetuosity, counterbalanced, however, by a warm heart, and a tone of frankness and manly sincerity pervading all his actions, winning general esteem. Visits to the Eltons with me became

frequent, my vacations and recreations away from the pursuits of business were generally passed with Grattan Elton, and in the course of three years after my first acquaintance with the family, Thorn Cottage had become to me a second home.

Having thus briefly introduced the Elton family, and described the footing on which I stood with its members, I here leave them, to introduce other characters who figured in the singular course of events which I am about to relate.

There is a time in our lives when the heart is daily awakened to newly-discovered joys, when, as the mind expands, the world, like a vast moving panorama, presents fresh scenes to the delighted eye; objects looked on before are seen again under a new and brighter aspect; light is breaking around the footsteps of the advancing enthusiastic spirit; iris-hued is the path of life, and the heart lifted buoyantly up in the fulness of its joy, knowing little or nought of doubt and deceit, is full of love, ay, and of happy trusting, too.

It was at this period of my boyhood that, on the completion of my devoirs at school, I visited a relative on the maternal side, who resided in Cornwall, and who had sent a pressing invitation for me to spend a month or two with him, previous to my entering upon the business pursuits for which I was intended. For the purpose of this narrative, it is not requisite that I should more than briefly observe that my relative, at the time of my visiting him, was somewhat on the wrong side of sixty, was warm-hearted, though eccentric, occasionally afflicted with the gout, and lived in a rather spacious building, which then bore, and I believe still bears, the name of Rock Hall.

It was whilst sojourning in Cornwall that I became acquainted with a young artist, who had only preceded me a few weeks in his visit to B——, the county town in the suburbs of which Rock Hall was situated. The wild and picturesque views of the neighbourhood offered great attraction to a lover of fine scenery; to me they afforded untiring objects for companionship and admiration; and although generally alone in my rambles, my relative being too infirm often to accompany me, yet were those lonely wanderings full of delight. It was owing to this rambling spirit, and observing the artist sketching some of my favourite views, that I made his acquaintance, although not arising from any particular desire on my part for companionship; for then, and ever since, could I happily, beneath spreading boughs, with Cowley, exclaim—

> Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
> Hear the soft winds above me sighing,
> With all their wanton boughs dispute—
> And the more tuneful birds to both replying,
> Nor be myself, too, mute.
>
> Ah, wretched and too solitary he
> Who loves not his own company;
> He'll feel the weight of't many a day,
> Unless he call in sin or vanity
> To help to bear't away.

Little surprising, however, is it that, through our frequently meeting, two worshippers in the same temple, some sort of acquaintance should arise, although in years there was much disparity between us. The artist had seen some five-and-twenty, although he looked much younger, being of slight frame, and femininely fair, whilst I

had scarce reached the threshold of manhood. Our casual acquaintance, notwithstanding, soon grew into close companionship. He was an enthusiast in his love of the art which he followed, and possessed a gentleness of manner, tinged with a shade of pensiveness, and a quiet, polished bearing most winning. I became much attached to him, and used to sit for hours by his side as he sketched, listening with admiration and delight whilst he discoursed on painting, poetry, and music, with an eloquence to me as new as it was charming.

His reading had been varied and extensive; there was also a dash of romance colouring his ideas, and a fervour in his language, when excited, which the most unimaginative could not listen to without interest and delight. To me, youthful listener as I was, his discourse was magical as Prospero's wand; how eagerly I hung upon his words, beholding in imagination scenes of the grand and beautiful which his masterly description conjured up before me; and never shall I forget the delight it was mine to experience, whilst sitting beside him, as he sketched ruin hoary or wooded dell, listening to his glowing language, telling of other scenes where he had wandered, classic spots hallowed for ever by the triumphs of genius, and inspiration of immortal song.

And yet I could not but observe that there was a great tendency to melancholy in my gifted companion; often would he appear lost in a reverie of painful reflections, a long silence being at times broken by a sigh, which seemed to come from the very depths of his soul.

On my first rallying him upon this tendency to sadness, he said, with him it was constitutional; but, as we became more intimate, on my again alluding thereto, and expressing my surprise that he should give way to such attacks of gloom, he smiled, shook his head, told me I was young, basking in the light, and happily knew nought of the shadows which grim care had cast amongst the sunshine of some of the sons of earth.

It was not long ere I discovered that the artist was anything but rich, or even in easy circumstances; and the result of my inquiries respecting him in B—— to some extent accounted for that melancholy which was so conspicuous a feature in his character. It appeared that he had advertised himself in B—— as a portrait-painter; but, up to the time of my meeting him, the encouragement received had been so very little, that he had turned his attention to sketching and disposing of views in the neighbourhood as a source of emolument, until he should succeed in becoming better known.

My relative, as I have before observed, was an eccentric but a warm-hearted son of humanity. He was a lover of the fine arts, and the description I gave him of the accomplished yet poor artist, and the expression of my sympathy for him in his struggles, led to a proceeding on the part of the worthy proprietor of Rock Hall, which afforded me very sincere gratification; it was doubly pleasing, for it took me by surprise. A week had elapsed since I first mentioned to him the lowly position and struggling efforts of the sketcher, in whom I felt so much interested, and the absence of any display of sympathy in word or deed on his part had not a little grieved and disappointed me, when I was delightfully undeceived by a revelation of his eccentricity and warmth of heart together.

Returning with him from church one Sunday morning, and the discourse we had heard teaching non-repining, and patience, and humility under affliction, having led my thoughts to the poor artist, I observed that I had

not for some time met him with his portfolio in his accustomed haunts, expressing, at the same time, a desire to learn what had become of him.

"Not seen him, lately!" rejoined my aged companion; "by the way, I know where he lives. Come, let us call upon him."

I knew my relative was somewhat eccentric, and I regarded this to me unexpected proposition to call on the artist, as but a sudden whim, for, as before observed, I had felt much disappointed in finding all the admiration and sympathy which I had expressed for the sketcher, fail to awaken the slightest manifest response in the breast of my worthy host.

To me it had proved a source of much regret, knowing, as I did, the artist was poor and a stranger, and that my entertainer, from his position and influence in the neighbourhood, might be of considerable service to one whom I could not but regard as fated to battle with adversity, friendless and forsaken.

It will not appear surprising that a young and inexperienced judgment like mine, from what I had seen, should come to such a conclusion; and it may readily be imagined that it was with feelings of considerable delight I heard my worthy companion express his intention of calling upon the artist.

"Mr. Blair is above, I suppose," said the old gentleman, as, scarcely awaiting a reply from the domestic who answered our summons at the door of the lodging-house, he passed her, and led the way up a flight of stairs before us, and to my great astonishment, as I followed in his wake, with the preface only of a slight tap opened the door of one of the apartments and entered.

Following after, I soon found myself grasped by the hand of Blair, who, apparently taken by surprise, in a faded and worn dressing-gown, had advanced to meet us.

"This is kind—very kind, sir," said he to my companion, with his soft melodious voice, which seemed to falter with emotion; and, turning his eyes again upon me, looked as if he would express his gratitude to me also; but with the few words he had uttered, he became silent, as though he feared, by again speaking, he should display that weakness which the tear standing in his eye had already revealed.

I was lost in astonishment; but my wonder was not a little increased by the friendly and familiar manner in which my relative proceeded to address the artist, this being the first intimation I had received of his having seen him before. But the proprietor of Rock Hall was fond of surprises, and this was one, I immediately conjectured, he had prepared for me.

"I told you that I should probably call to-day, Blair," said my companion. "You must find it confoundedly dull here on Sunday, your brush laid aside, and cabined up all alone. A poor look-out this," turning to me as though for an assent to his words; "bricked up, buried, in fact," he continued, whilst turning his gaze through the one window to the row of houses, which seemed oppressively near, on the opposite side of the narrow street. "Nice rooms on the parade, Blair; Turner's, you know them, suit you much better—lighter, healthier, something of a view too; room for the winds to blow about. I'd change if I were you; deuced bad policy to stay here—dead and buried—nothing but bricks and blue devils!" And he again turned his eyes to me, as though he would meet, which he certainly did, a look of affirmation to all he said.

"I saw Turner's rooms when I first came," said the artist; "but ——" and, casting his eyes upon the ground, he paused.

"Ay, ay, I understand," rejoined my relative, as though it had but then occurred to him that a stronger motive than taste had guided the artist in selecting his lodgings; "I understand, Blair; high charges; but come, we are losing time; our errand here is to request the favour of your company to dinner."

There was a straightforward earnestness of manner in the old gentleman's way of giving the invitation that bore a hearty welcome in every word. After a little hesitation, Blair expressed the pleasure that it would afford him, and begging to be excused whilst he retired to change his coat, left us to look over the subjects in his studio, the which, by-the-way, served also the double purpose of his sitting-room.

"What think you of this?" said my worthy relative, pointing to an unfinished portrait of himself that stood on the easel. I had observed it on first entering the room, and, as may be imagined, it had not a little contributed to the surprise which my companion's proposition to call on the artist had in the first place occasioned.

The painting was one of considerable merit, and I was lavish in my encomiums.

"Now can I understand," I added, "Blair's absence from his accustomed haunts! You have stolen a march upon me here—I see it all; you have sought him out, found him a worthy, deserving fellow, and have taken him by the hand."

And I was correct; ere Blair rejoined us, the old gentleman briefly informed me, that by my observations his interest in the artist had been awakened; he had called upon him, and the result was not only a commission to paint his own portrait, but he had obtained, also, the same for him from some half-dozen others of his, my relative's, friends.

I will not dwell upon the introduction of the artist to Rock Hall; he speedily became a great favourite, and, ere the expiration of my visit, Rock Hall had become his home.

Yes, his entertainer was proverbial for doing nothing by halves; he found Blair in every respect a gentleman, poor and unfriended, struggling amidst the breakers. He took him by the hand, nor sought to know more of the artist's history than that which he himself voluntary gave, and which was simply that circumstances prevented him from entering into the particulars of his family connexions, and that he had been compelled, in order to gain a livelihood, to fall back upon that art which he had acquired as an accomplishment.

Blair continued to follow his profession in my relative's dwelling. One of the best rooms in the house, from its spaciousness and the situation of its lights, was converted into his studio, and, previous to my departure, he had commenced the seventh portrait, for which he had received commissions through the instrumentality of his warm-hearted host.

And yet, whilst receiving so much kindness, and in his circumstances good fortune, there still remained a mournfulness about him which nothing seemed to relieve; a sadness in the expression of his countenance when in a state of repose, which added to the interest none could but feel who looked upon him, and who had heard of his fallen fortunes. With me, great was the sympathy I entertained for him, which strengthened the more we were thrown together, and it was to me delight untiring to sit

for hours in his studio, watching the operations of his brush, listening as he eloquently explained the principles and beauty of his art, or when he led me on the wings of imagination to the realms of poetry and romance. The artist sang also, and that with remarkable taste and expression; and he would at times, as if suddenly inspired, pour forth the language of his saddened spirit in song. Of him, however, when he thus gave vent to his feelings, it could not be said, as in those exquisite lines of which it has been said, that for the picture they present, and their harmony of rhythm, they may scarcely be equalled by any four lines in our language—

Verse sweetens toil, however rude the sound,
All at her work the village maiden sings;
Nor, while she turns the giddy wheel around,
Revolves the sad vicissitude of things.

Alas! with Blair, the more he sang the more melancholy he became. His songs were all of a plaintive character; the pathos and tenderness he threw into them rendered them ever effective, and he became an established favourite with all at the numerous parties which were wont to assemble under the hospitable roof of Rock Hall.

This leaning from the sunshine to the shade was a striking feature in his character; and although he would at times, in a vague and somewhat mysterious manner, allude to the bright days of the past, and the clouds that had gathered over the star of his destiny, he never entered into particulars, and much interested as I felt in one who had so won upon my young imagination, I never indulged the desire which I entertained to learn something more of the misfortunes he alluded to by a single question.

Alas, for human nature, and the outward semblances of humanity! This man, who to every observer appeared, as he did to me, to possess so much exquisite sensibility, so gentle and noble a nature, and to be the undeserving victim of an adverse fate, was in reality a cold-blooded and heartless villain. But I am anticipating. It was some three or four months after the expiration of my visit to Rock Hall, where I had left Blair domiciled almost as one of the family, when I received a letter from my relative, which not a little astounded me, conveying as it did the information that the sheltered artist had proved to be an accomplished swindler.

The particulars of the discovery of his real character, as fully given in the letter which brought such unexpected intelligence, would occupy too much space to introduce here; it is only requisite for me to observe, that the party who had been employed to discover his retreat had, through some clue, traced him to Rock Hall, but through inadvertently discovering himself to Blair when he himself was unprepared for the meeting, and ere he had seen and apprized my relative of his mission, the artist had lost not a moment in suddenly decamping, but not until he had presented a forged cheque for fifty pounds at the banker's of his host.

The cheque was honoured, for Blair was known as an occupant of Rock Hall, in addition to which it bore a fac-simile of my relative's signature. It subsequently appeared, that the expert villain must, at some period, have taken an opportunity to possess himself of a leaf from his host's cheque-book, and had long practised himself in imitating his handwriting, ready to make use of when circumstances might render his departure essential.

The scheme proved, alas! too successful; and within an hour after

quitting the bank he had posted ten miles to catch a fast coach, which, in a few more hours, would land him in Exeter, from which place he would no doubt make his way with such expedition as to baffle all pursuit.

Indeed, it was not until two or three days afterwards the worthy proprietor of Rock Hall discovered that the cheque had been presented and paid to his departed guest. The day that Blair decamped, his absence was first accounted for by the individual who had flattered himself that he had tracked his man—himself unknown and unseen—waiting on my relative to apprize him of the real character he was harbouring, and to request his assistance in effecting a capture.

Alas! it was too late; the bird had flown. It occupied more than half of my worthy friend's long letter to describe to me his amazement—how incredulous he was at first, how satisfied that there must be some mistake, and how, as the proofs came thick and fast upon him, he at length saw how much he had been imposed upon.

It appeared that Blair was an assumed, and that Sefton was the artist's real name. From the functionary who so much enlightened my relative about the character of his late guest, he also learned that the artist was married, and had deserted his wife, after having extravagantly expended some ten thousand pounds which she had brought him as her marriage dower. It appeared, also, that, by means of his specious trickery, he had succeeded in completely deceiving his wife and her friends as to his true position at the time of the marriage. When too late, they discovered that Sefton, who had high connexions, had brought disgrace upon, and been all but ostracised by his family, and was not only a man of straw, but a dishonoured gambler, a needy adventurer. Not only had he expended the dowry of his wife, but, to a great extent, had laid large levies on the confidence and good-will of her relatives; and when the desperate game he played was on the point of being exposed, and on the eve of a discovery of his powers in the art of caligraphy, he decamped, leaving his wife behind him, almost broken-hearted, and her friends heavily victimised by the too-successful forger.

A correspondence ensued between my relative and the connexions of Sefton's wife, from which he found that the information he had received was in every particular, alas! too true. Under the strong impulse of his feelings, in writing to me again on the subject, he declared that he felt a strong inclination to start forthwith on an expedition, through the length and breadth of the land, in search of the heartless scoundrel. The base and unfeeling manner in which he had deceived and deserted a trusting and loving heart, in the person of his wife, appeared to raise the greatest amount of indignation in my relative's breast. His own wrongs seemed to be forgotten, for they were not mentioned; and I verily believe, had not a touch of gout come on about the time, the proprietor of Rock Hall would have sacrificed his fishing and his shooting to scour the country in search of the skilful impostor, who had shown himself to be so thorough a villain.

The circumstances which I have so far narrated occurred in the year 1832, and from that period, to the year 1845, nothing further relative to the swindler Sefton had transpired. In that interval, the worthy and warm-hearted proprietor of Rock Hall had shuffled off "this mortal coil" without hearing the slightest tidings of his victimiser. After the warmth of his indignation had subsided, in his many communications to

me, he never again alluded to the subject, save in the last epistle which I received from him a little before his death. In it, whilst indulging in a moralising strain on human life, he recalled the circumstances related, expressing a hope that the betrayed and deserted wife of Sefton had found, in the consolations of religion, that peace and happiness which is above the earth's giving; and citing the character of the fostered and befriended Blair, in illustration of the deep baseness of which the human heart is capable. Peace to thy manes! for thou hadst, indeed, much sympathy of heart, much love for thy fellow-man. Truth and Charity were thy companions on the path of life, and for such—ah! who can doubt?—there is a bright inheritance hereafter.

I had ever felt a strong desire to ascertain whether Sefton's wife, or her friends, had learned anything of his whereabout since his discovery and flight in Cornwall; and having occasion, in the year 1846, to visit the town, in the neighbourhood of which, as I had learned from Rock Hall, they resided, I made a point of calling upon them. I saw Mrs. Sefton and her little boy. In the same house was her father, a venerable, intelligent old gentleman, and a maiden sister of Mrs. Sefton's. I found them a very united and exceedingly pious little family, and, in recurring to Sefton, they spoke of him as though he were to them as dead and buried, yet, in a full spirit of forgiveness, with a hope that he had repented, and turned from the fearful course he had once pursued. It appeared that Mrs. Sefton, about two years prior to my calling upon her, had received a letter from her husband, requesting an interview, which she had refused, and declared nothing on earth would induce her to see him again. Indeed, I perceived, by the settled serenity of her still beautiful features, that all her thoughts and aspirations were removed from things of this world, save the training of her little boy, whose features bore a striking resemblance to, and strongly reminded me of, his father. I have never seen them since, although, as will appear, I had subsequently occasion to write to Mrs. Sefton, whom I cannot but ever remember as one of the most striking and beautiful presentations I ever beheld of a much-injured yet gentle and forgiving spirit.

And now let me request the reader's attention whilst I return to my friends the Eltons. I am writing no fiction. The names of the individuals, it is true, are assumed—a requisite proceeding, as some of the parties are still living—and but four summers have passed since the events occurred which I am about to relate, and which, if such were wanting, would afford strong and additional proof that truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

It was about four years after I had made the acquaintance of the Eltons, that, during one of my visits, I learned that at length one of Edith's many admirers had been accepted. When I received this intelligence from her brother Grattan, I was not a little surprised to hear that the favoured individual I had not yet seen. Frequently had I rallied Miss Elton on the subject of her many slaves, more particularly on one, a young surgeon, a very intimate friend of Grattan's and mine, and whom I had always regarded as the most favoured of her suitors. To my surprise, I learned that another, who had taken the field some few months only, had succeeded in gaining a heart which the young surgeon and others had as many years been endeavouring in vain to win.

With the old gentleman, Mr. Willmott, the fortunate suitor, was a pro-

digious favourite; and Edith's brother, sharing the general fascination, when informing me of the acceptance, observed, that much as he felt for the disappointment of his friend Harry Burton, he must confess that he thought Willmott was, from similarity of tastes, ideas, and temperament, much better adapted for Edith. I learned that this universal favourite had been introduced to the family circle by Grattan, who had made his acquaintance at some watering-place, and invited him to Thorn Cottage. Mr. Wilimott, who, it appeared, was a gentleman, enjoying a moderate competency, had become so charmed with the place and the society to which he had been introduced, that, soon after the expiration of his visit, he had returned and engaged apartments in the town, and, thriving in his wooing, had proposed, on his marriage, to take a residence within a short distance of Thorn Cottage.

It so chanced, when these tidings were conveyed to me, that Mr. Willmott had, the day previous to my arrival, taken his departure on a brief visit to his friends in Wiltshire, where he had some business matters to arrange. Never had I seen Edith Elton look so truly beautiful as she now appeared.

> Upon her eyelids many graces sate,
> Under the shadow of her even browes,
> Working belgardes and amorous retrate;
> And everie one her with a grace endowes,
> And everie one with meekness to her bowes:
> So glorious mirrhour of celestiall grace,
> And sovraine moniment of mortal vowes,
> How shall frayle pen describe her heavenly face,
> For feare, through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace!

As though even another light had been lit up in the temple of her mind, her features beamed with a brighter radiance than ever, and as she laid some chalk drawings of Willmott's before me, truly delightful was it to listen to the lute-like voice of the ingenuous, happy, affianced Edith, speaking, from the fulness of her heart, of what Walter had told her of this scene, and where he had sketched another. "Happy fellow! he has won a treasure," I thought, as Edith, closing the portfolio, advanced to the pianoforte, and, at her father's request, sang for me a sweet ballad, written and composed by the talented and fortunate Willmott.

Much did I regret that circumstances prevented me prolonging my stay to meet the successful wooer; and after a delightful sojourn of some five or six days, I took my leave, but not until I had given a promise to Mr. Elton, Grattan, and Edith, that I would spend a week with them at the time of the marriage, which was to take place some time in the following autumn.

That autumn came. I had received several communications from Grattan Elton in the interval, for we were, and still are, constant correspondents; all was going as merry as a marriage bell, and at length I received the letter announcing the important day, with a postscript from the old gentleman, wherein he expressed a hope that nothing would prevent my being with them a few days before the wedding took place, and that I would make arrangements to stay with them as long as I possibly could, to share in their festivities. Reader, there may be little of the superstition, or first fear, which in the nursery was engrafted on thy young mind, left now in thy nature; but hast thou not experienced a presentiment of coming evil—a foreshadowing of events, which hath

brought thee, if not positive sadness, considerable uneasiness? Hast thou never felt a depression stealing on thy spirit—a heaviness and gloom for which thou couldst, perhaps, assign no cause—a darkness, which has resisted all thy efforts to dispel, as though some huge shadow had cast itself upon the sunshine of thy heart, whilst thou hast looked in vain for the substance from which it came? Those who have more than once experienced such remarkable forebodings, followed by unforeseen and unwelcome events, can scarcely be but believers in some mysterious agency—call it second-sight, if you will—which communicates, as it were, with the soul, ere thought can grapple it, as the flash of light precedes the crash of the pealing thunder.

I know not that I ever experienced this peculiar sensation so forcibly as on an evening in September, 1845, when I seated myself beside the most facetious of whips, who drove her Majesty's mail from Lincoln to Peterborough, taking in its way ——, that little-known, yet beautifully-situated country town.

Often had I been his companion on the box, and never had I journeyed with him before without appreciating with considerable relish his sterling though unpolished wit, and entering freely into the humour and merriment which seemed ever to be his, when a familiar face, as mine had become to him, was by his side. In vain Old Ned—for so he was called—I say was, for he, in common with most of his brethren, has gone the way of all Jarvies before the advance of the steeds of fire—in vain Old Ned did all he could to enliven me; I knew not why, but I suffered from a sudden depression of spirits, such as I believe it was never before my lot to experience. Rather, however, than the old whip should consider I paid him any disrespect—for we had had many a cheerful journey together—I told him that he must excuse my silence as I was not altogether well. But Old Ned would talk, and doubtless suspecting the cause of my indisposition to chat as of yore, straightway launched into a yarn, the subject of which was the "blue devils," and how to "fight 'em." As a story of the box, and a good one too, were it not so very irrelevant to my narrative, I would here introduce it; suffice it that the subject of the yarn I have already mentioned; the heroes of the story, the narrator's self and his Bardolph-like guard, Bill Hicks, who shared with him the reputation of being second to very few in the quantities of potent liquids which he could imbibe. Poor Old Ned! thou art gone the way of all flesh; yet long will the rich, unctuous manner, in which thou wert wont to spin thy yarns, live in the memory of one who by thy side has travelled many and many a mile, in winter rude and summer mild, midst storm and darkness, and when stars have been gemming the vault of heaven, and hill and valley, lit by their tranquil and holy light, were slumbering away hours of the stilly night. Yes, that once well-appointed four is off—Old Ned is gone—no more the road reverberates in the silent night to the clattering gallop of the spirited team; grass grows now on the highway, and the steam-whistle, like the cry of a giant in his agony, alone disturbs the midnight hour, where of yore the guard's horn was wont to awaken musical echoes in the woods, and rouse the recluse spirit in the turnpike-house from his stolen slumber.

The mail set me down at the entrance to Thorn Cottage, and as I passed up the garden, the sound of music and the shadowed forms or

dancers flitting on the window-blinds, informed me that the evening's amusement had commenced.

Whilst engaged at my toilet, I was joined by my friend Grattan, who was all impatience for me to join the company, and to introduce me to his friend and intended brother-in-law, Willmott.

There was a brilliant gathering of the beauty of the neighbourhood present, as well as a number of Mr. Elton's relatives, who had come some distance on a visit to be present at the wedding, which, as I have before observed, was to take place in a few days. After the usual friendly greetings with those not engaged in the dance, whom I had been in the habit of meeting at Mr. Elton's, and after the customary cordial shake of the hand and brief chat with the old gentleman, who sat the picture of happiness, contemplating the enjoyment of those around him, I drew with Grattan to a part of the room which commanded a full view of the assembled company.

Grattan was making some remarks about a particular beauty in the room, to whom, as a partner for the next dance, he was proffering to introduce me, when, all of a sudden, in looking for the object he was describing, my gaze became rivetted on the partner of Edith Elton, who, at that moment, was leading her by the hand, advancing in a figure of the quadrille, when his full countenance was presented to me.

"For Heaven's sake," I involuntarily exclaimed, whilst grasping the arm of young Elton, "who is that dancing with Edith?"

"Willmott," was the reply. "But, good God, what is the matter?"

For a moment or two I was silent; indeed, my astonishment seemed to have deprived me of the power of utterance.

"The villain!" I at length exclaimed, in a tone of voice sufficiently loud to startle a group standing near, who turned round to observe us. "Come with me, Grattan; let us leave the room," I hurriedly whispered, with as much control over my sudden excitement as I could command, "quickly, ere the dance be over; unobserved, if possible; I must speak to you alone, and immediately."

Young Elton saw at once, by my manner, that something unusual and of moment had occurred. Without uttering a syllable, he led the way. We glided out of the room, and taking a light from the hall, Grattan conducted me to his study. As I afterwards learned from him, a presentiment of evil had come upon him from the moment I had exhibited such sudden emotion on beholding Edith and her partner; and when he closed the door of the apartment to which he had conducted me, and placed the light on the table, he turned an anxious, inquiring look upon me, with features pale as death. I will but briefly dwell on a scene, the recollection of which will be to me ever deeply painful. The reader will have anticipated the discovery. The painful truth was soon told to that affectionate, that fond, loving brother. Willmott, who had gained the esteem of father and son, and the affections of Edith, was a swindler—a double-dyed, heartless villain. It is scarcely requisite for me to add, that, in the accomplished and too-successful wooer, I had recognised the unprincipled and cold-blooded Sefton. I could not possibly be mistaken. In reply to my questions, Grattan informed me that none of Willmott's friends were present. To the invitations sent, letters in reply had been received from some, begging to be excused on account of the great distance, adding a hope that Edwin and Edith would soon visit them;

others had not replied at all, which Willmott attributed to their feeling somewhat offended that Grattan and his sister had not paid to the family a visit, as was once arranged. This arrangement, I may here observe, was Willmott's own; and, as was afterwards remembered, through an ingenious device of his, also, the visit was to be postponed until after the nuptials. The letters received in reply to the invitations sent were, of course, Sefton's own.

Years had passed since I had last seen him; but his features had been too deeply then impressed on my memory for me ever to forget them. There was but little alteration in his appearance; as I have before observed, he was small-featured and femininely fair, and the time that had elapsed since we had last met was passed at a period of his life when manhood may be said to be far from maturity. To Grattan, to his father, and to Edith, I had long ago related the circumstances connected with the villain artist I had met in Cornwall. Grattan at once remembered the relation thereof; and as the full truth broke in upon him, in the bitterness of his grief and indignation, he gave vent to his feelings in a paroxysm of rage, which I had some difficulty in calming.

Under the influence of his excited feelings, he was about to rush into the ball-room, and brand Willmott as a villain before the whole company. My representing the shock which, coming so suddenly upon them, it would be to Edith and her father, alone restrained him. Painful, indeed, must have been the thoughts then flitting through his mind, reflecting, as he naturally would, that through his want of judgment and over-confidence, he had been so completely duped. Won by Sefton's plausible manners and gentlemanly bearing, on the groundwork of a casual introduction, he had formed a friendship for and introduced him to his father's house—had eulogised his qualities to Edith. He knew that she had given her heart, with all the fervour of a woman's love, to the successful wooer; and now, in the bitterness of his spirit, after the first outbreak of passion, he threw himself into a chair, buried his face in his hands, exclaiming, "Poor Edith!" and sobbed like a child.

Soon, however, had the deep sympathy for his sister, which for the moment had unmanned him, passed away, and after a hurried exchange of opinions as to the best plan of proceeding, it was agreed that we should at once reveal the matter to the old gentleman, and take his advice how to act under the circumstances. I need scarcely say that all this, as well as that which followed in the study, passed in a much briefer period than the time it takes to describe.

Having instructed one of the servants to proceed so as not to draw the attention of any part of the company upon him, I gave him a note to deliver to his master, the pencilled message requesting him to lose not a moment in quietly withdrawing, and joining me and Grattan in the study. Whilst we were awaiting his coming, Grattan paced the room hurriedly to and fro, in a state of excitement bordering on distraction. The old gentleman's countenance bore indication of considerable uneasiness when he joined us. I will not, however, dwell on the painful subject of his distress—the alternating bursts of grief and indignation which escaped him on receiving the unwelcome and unexpected intelligence. He and Grattan, however, together beheld a gleam of hope in the possibility that I might be mistaken; and the *soi-disant* Willmott, without

causing any notice from the guests, in obedience to the summons sent by Mr. Elton, entered the study where we awaited him.

It may be well, in order to make the narrative intelligible, in this place to observe, that Sefton, when I first met him as Blair, had never heard me (being but a youth) called by any other than my christian name; and, as my relative in Cornwall was on the maternal side, it was probably never known to Sefton, or, of so little moment, forgotten if ever heard, that my name was different to that of his kind-hearted host. Hence, on hearing me spoken of by the Eltons, there was nothing in the name to inform him that we had met before, and that Grattan's friend was no other than his once companion, the youth in Cornwall, and who, alas! for the success of his plans, knew so much of his history.

That which followed, on Sefton's entrance, may easily be imagined. On hearing my voice when I accosted him by his own name, he became deadly pale, and his agitation so great that he could scarcely stand, seeking the friendly aid of the back of a chair which stood near to support himself.

For a moment his astonishment and consternation appeared to have deprived him of the power of utterance, and the play and contortions of the muscles of his mouth revealed how truly had gone home to his alarmed conscience the words which told him he was discovered. After a pause, however, during which to some extent he managed to recover from the confusion into which he had been thown, the practised villain, with an unblushing front, pretended to regard me as one labouring under some strange delusion, and, assuming an air of the heroics, turned to Mr. Elton, requesting to know the meaning of so strange a proceeding. Without giving Mr. Elton time to reply to the question, under the influence of passion, which I did not care to restrain, I proceeded, in no measured terms, at once to accuse him, not only as an impostor, but a cold-hearted villain; that I could procure proof of his having committed forgery, and was determined, if possible, on bringing him to justice.

"You have," I continued, whilst he quailed beneath my look, "by means of your specious and plausible manner, ingratiated yourself, under a false name, here, as you have before elsewhere succeeded in doing. In one instance you requited kindness with base ingratitude, and the height of your criminality was robbery! Here, your villany is of a blacker dye; for you have, under a false character, won the affections of a confiding woman, and may have destroyed her peace for ever; for, even were you able to disprove what I allege—that you have stooped to forgery—you cannot deny that your name is Sefton, and that your wife still lives, an instance of your cold-blooded heartlessness and treachery."

With all my knowledge of his character, I was certainly not prepared for the display of self-possession and coolness which he had by this time summoned to aid him in the emergency.

Turning again to Mr. Elton, with an air of much-injured innocence, he claimed his protection from such unfounded attacks upon his character, declaring, upon his honour as a gentleman, that he knew nothing of me or the circumstances I had been relating; and then, after a brief pause, added, that he would stay no longer to be so insulted, nor would he again place his foot over Mr. Elton's threshold, until he should receive an apology for the gross insult he had received.

I was perfectly amazed at this coolness, and could clearly perceive that

the assurance and self-possession which he displayed were rapidly producing an effect upon the senior and younger Elton. This soon manifested itself: father and son alike were as is one who perceives an unexpected gleam where all before was utter darkness. Yes; it was possible, that it might be a mistake of identity. Grattan and the old gentleman agreed that, after the lapse of so many years, there was much probability of my labouring under a delusion.

They spoke agreeably to the hope to which they both seemed to cling; but I was not less firm in my conviction, and pledged myself to produce, in two days, unquestionable proofs in support of the charge which I had made. Willmott, as he called himself, who, in spite of his nerve, I could perceive, was anything but at ease, in accordance with his expressed determination to quit the house, evinced that he was about to retire.

"You will not refuse to say 'good night,'" said the accomplished villain, as he advanced with extended hand to the old gentleman. "I am, at all events, innocent until proved guilty," smiling as he uttered this, as though the bare supposition of his being the guilty party, as by me represented, was an amusing piece of pleasantry.

At the same moment, Mr. Elton turned to look into my countenance, with an expression that seemed inquiringly and hopingly to say, "Are you not mistaken; he is surely not the depraved villain, Sefton?" In my looks, however, he would read anything but a response to the hope which he seemed so fondly to cling to; for, had I before entertained the shadow of a doubt—had my confidence in the slightest wavered, this last act more than ever convinced me of his being no other than the plausible scoundrel, whose proceedings in Cornwall had presented to me the first instance of the deep baseness of which the human heart is capable.

Grattan Elton, although with his father strongly hoping, and more than half-inclined to believe, that I was mistaken—so thoroughly had he ingratiated himself with father and son—yet, influenced by my unshaken confidence, refused to accept the proffered hand which Sefton, in withdrawing, extended towards him.

"Should," said Grattan, "my friend fail in the proofs he pledges himself to bring, the position in which I am now placed will be ample apology to you for declining your hand. Should his allegations prove true, you will hear more from me."

This last sentence was uttered slowly, but in a firm determined voice that had greater significance than the words themselves; and I could perceive beneath the brother's searching eye, that the impostor slightly trembled.

Surprised at our absence, Miss Elton at this moment entered the study, as Sefton was retiring. With a grace of manner, possessed to a degree rarely equalled, the intended husband advanced to meet her, and taking her hand, he said,

"My love, I am unexpectedly obliged to bid you good night. Mr. Elton and your brother will give you an explanation when I am gone. I leave my character fearlessly in your hands, although it at present appears to be suffering from this gentleman," pointing as he spoke to me, "who is labouring under some unaccountable delusion, and who has brought charges against me, which, although utterly without foundation, and unaccompanied by a single proof, I much regret to perceive are half-

believed. Until the matter be cleared up, and I receive an apology for the insult which I have received beneath this roof, I cannot think of again entering its portals, even to see you, my dear Edith. Dearest Edith, good night!"

Then changing the tones of his voice, and throwing therein all the indignant sternness which he could command, he continued,

"Mr. Elton, Mr. Grattan Elton, good night! and to you, sir," next addressing me; "let me have your proofs—yes, your proofs, sir—soon as possible; failing which, you will learn more of Edwin Willmott than you may possibly like!"

I met the theatrical way in which this was given, and the look of defiance with which it was accompanied, with a smile, contenting myself, as he quitted the room, by throwing as much contempt as possible in the tones of my voice, whilst I slowly uttered,

"Edwin Willmott!——"

As may be imagined, there was something of a scene attendant upon the unexpected parting of Edith and her affianced husband; this, in part, however, we were spared, as she accompanied him from the room. She was absent but a short time, the door closed on him who was destined never there to enter again, and she returned in a state of great agitation to hear from her father's lips that which, if true, was the destruction of her day-dreams for ever.

The festive proceedings were soon brought to a conclusion; Grattan informed the company that his sister had become suddenly indisposed, and a whisper having gone forth that something unexpected had occurred, they speedily retired, and in a short time after the house was as still as death.

The excitement that young Elton and myself were under was too great for us to think of our seeking our pillows, and that no time might be lost we remained up together, and succeeded in prevailing on the postmaster of the town, who had made up the post-bags, to unseal them for letters which I had written to Mrs. Sefton and to her father.

In these communications I stated fully all the particulars connected with my meeting with Sefton, under the assumed name of Willmott, and his engagement to Miss Elton, requesting them, if possible, not to lose a moment in coming over to ——, to confirm the discovery I had made, and so frustrate the villain's design.

My impression, whilst penning the letters, was, that they would not be required. "To-morrow, Grattan," I said, "the bird will have flown." Young Elton, however, seemed to cling to the hope that I was labouring under a mistake, and indeed, the more he reflected on the circumstances, he appeared somewhat inclined to regret the course he had pursued towards Willmott, on such likely to be mistaken grounds as memory, when opposed to his knowledge of him, which had always found him to be a man of strict honour.

Strong in the impression that Willmott would not remain an hour in the town after quitting Mr. Elton's, after an early breakfast on the following morning I called at his residence, which, I may here mention, preparatory to the marriage he had taken, furnishing it—alas! for some of the tradesmen in the town—in the very first style.

My surmise proved too well founded; Sefton had taken his departure,

as we learned from one of the domestics, that very morning by the up-mail which passes through at half-after three. He had instructed them to say that he should return on the following evening, in the event of any one calling to see him during his absence.

I will not attempt to describe the manner in which this intelligence affected the old gentleman and his son, or the almost silent but painfully visible effect it produced on Edith.

"Gone!" she exclaimed in a tone of voice that I shall never forget; she said no more, but the colour forsook her cheeks from that moment for ever, and she seemed like one awakening from a beautiful dream to a scene of utter wreck and desolation.

> As the close of a beautiful dream,
> Which Fancy hath wreath'd in radiance so bright,
> And broken her spell in the darkness of night.

The reader will be prepared to hear that the accomplished swindler had left —— considerably in debt. On the strength of his intimacy with the Eltons, and his engagement to Mr. Elton's daughter, who it was known, in her own right possessed a handsome fortune, the tradesmen of the place had trusted Willmott without the slightest reserve, and were consequently heavy sufferers. Grattan Elton, only a week prior to the distressing *dénouement*, had advanced him a sum of money, as a temporary loan, some very plausible pretext being advanced at the time by the borrower for his requiring it for a short time only.

The self-same day of Sefton's flight saw young Elton's departure on the somewhat Quixotic expedition of overtaking him, burning with indignation, and fired almost to a state of frenzy by the reflection that he and his family had been so grossly and unfeelingly deceived. As to the old gentleman, he appeared deeply sensible that he had much to be grateful for, in his darling child's narrow escape; and yet to him it was a serious blow. The happiness of his Edith had been the subject of his day-dreams for years. Under his approval and esteem for the same object, she had given away her woman's heart, the vision of a bright future had been suddenly dispelled, and he trembled for the probable effect it might produce on one he so truly idolized.

On the third day after Sefton's flight, the brother of his wife arrived, in accordance with the request contained in my letters. His presence, however, was not required, the *soi-disant* Willmott, by his departure, having dispelled all doubts as to his being the impostor I had described. During his stay, Mrs. Sefton's brother, to Mr. Elton and myself, entered fully into an account of the many pieces of villany of which Sefton had been guilty; and it appeared that had it not been for his wife, who (though determined never to see him again) had so far interceded for him as to induce our informant and other members of his family, that had severely suffered by him, to promise to stay their efforts to bring him to justice, there was but little doubt they would ultimately have brought home to Sefton the punishment his crimes so richly merited.

Grattan's pursuit was unsuccessful. Sefton was too great an adept in the science of retreat to be caught; and the exasperated brother returned, after some days' absence, to find his sister confined to her room by a severe attack of indisposition, consequent upon the shock she had received, and which her delicate frame was so little capable of sustaining.

Before my departure from Thorn Cottage, Edith had sufficiently recovered to sit up in her room, where, at her request, I proceeded to wish her good-bye. This was the first time I had seen her since, in her brother's study, on the eventful night of Sefton's discovery, when, after he had left us, to her father, to Grattan, and to me, she declared her conviction that the very suspicion of his being guilty of the charge I had advanced, was a wrong to the nobleness of his nature; that she felt confident there was some unfortunate error, and expressed her reliance, her unalterable trust and confidence in him she loved, alas! too well. And, oh! what a change had taken place in the beautiful Edith. I could not have believed it possible that, in so short a period, such an alteration could have been effected. Her smile was the same, sweet and winning as ever; but her cheeks were very pale; and her voice, with its usual melody, had now a melancholy saddened tone, which, when it first fell on my ear, almost unmanned me.

There was ever something so open, so charmingly ingenuous in Edith's manner, combined with the unreserve attendant upon our long friendship, that I ever felt in my conversation with her as though I were speaking to a sister. Had she, indeed, been so, I could not have experienced a keener pang than I did on first beholding the gentle sufferer, the sweet, yet mournful tones of whose voice revealed that the strings of the lute were breaking. With an apparent effort at cheerfulness, she spoke of the eventful circumstances that had passed, said she should soon be herself again, and then proceeded to request that I would describe to her my first meeting with Sefton, and the subsequent circumstances which developed his true character.

It was in vain I stated that her medical attendant had enjoined me not to enter upon the subject, and had given his permission only for me to see her, to say adieu, on the understanding that my visit was to be but brief.

"Next time I come to Thorn Cottage, Miss Elton," I said, "you will be much better, stronger, and——"

"Next visit!" said the beautiful invalid, interrupting me; "that may be a very long time, and," she continued, after a short pause, whilst a faint smile, like a radius flitting o'er the winter's snow, passed over her pallid features, "by that time the subject will have lost its interest."

I found it impossible to refuse her earnest desire, and as her father, who had accompanied me, also expressed a wish that I should comply with her request, I entered fully into an account of my first meeting with Blair, the high estimate I had formed of him, his introduction to my relative's house, and, in short, the whole series of events connected with the accomplished villain already communicated to the reader.

When I spoke of my interview with Mrs. Sefton the listener sighed deeply, and whilst her bosom heaved with emotion, tears, which she did not attempt to restrain, suffused her beautiful eyes, testifying with silent eloquence her sympathy for one who, perhaps, like herself, had loved too well.

When I had brought my story to an end, for some moments Miss Elton remained silent, with her eyes fixed intently on the floor, apparently lost in deep thought. I did not interrupt her musings, but turned to look at her father, who, also, in an apparent reverie, sitting upon the sofa and

leaning his hands on his stick, was gazing earnestly on the features of his invalid daughter, with an expression of blended apprehension and affection, as though there was centred his world, and to him all besides were a desert, a blank, a nothingness.

When Edith again spoke it was upon some other subject, and it appeared after that interview the name of Sefton or Edwin Willmott was never heard again to pass her lips. Ere taking my final leave, at Edith's request I read to her for near an hour from one of her favourite authors, Mrs. Hemans. I remember well that I closed the volume with the reading of those beautiful lines, "The Voice of Spring,"

> I come, I come, ye have called me long,
> I come o'er the mountains with light and song!

and observed, as I rose to bid her good-bye, that I hoped on my visit in the following spring, I should find her fully restored to health and the joyous Edith I had once known her. For a moment her features were illumined with a smile, which, passing away, left an expression of suffering and melancholy behind, which I could not contemplate without considerable pain; and as she extended her hand to bid me adieu, I could read in the language of her tear-dimmed, spiritually-soft blue eyes, she felt at that moment the spring I spoke of she would never see.

I never saw her more.

Spring, the beautiful spring that she loved so well, came with its sunshine and its flowers, and Edith Elton was sleeping her last sleep in the churchyard of ——.

Grattan, in his customary letters, had, at various times, informed me of his sister's rapid decline. The first communication which I received from him after my departure conveyed the intelligence that she had fallen into a state of despondency from which nothing could arouse her; another, that she had taken to her room—then she was a little better—was rallying—was worse again—dangerous symptoms had revealed themselves—she was wasting away—she was dead.

Young Elton's letter, containing the last melancholy piece of intelligence, also informed me, that much as he anticipated Edith's death would affect the old gentleman, he was not prepared to find him taking it so deeply to heart. "He shuns all society, wanders about alone, sometimes steals out at the dead of night, and passes hours by Edith's grave. If you possibly can spare the time, by the friendship you bear me," continued Grattan's letter to me, "come over and assist me to rouse him from the depth of his despondency."

About a month after Miss Elton's death, I stood once more under the roof of Thorn Cottage, where I had passed some of the most joyous moments of my life. Alas! how great the change since I had there paid my first visit; there was a gloom about the place quite oppressive, and from the moment my eyes rested on the old gentleman, I felt that ere long the wreck would be indeed complete, for of a verity one glance was enough to tell his spirit was, indeed, broken. All our efforts to rouse him were in vain; he resolutely refused to change the scene, even for a few days, clinging to the spot where the idol of his heart had been—dwelling on the pages she had been wont to read—playing over her favourite songs—and hovering around her last resting-place—as though

he sought and hoped for her gentle spirit to revisit earth, to cheer him in the intensity of his grief.

I may here observe, that of him who had been the chief cause of this misery, I have never since heard. It is within the bounds of probability, that in my wanderings I may again meet with him—such is my fervent desire and hope—and should we meet, wherever it may be, it will prove an eventful hour in the villain's life. There is another who also indulges the hope that, whatever else may be to him the dispensations of fate, Sefton may but once again cross his path, and who strongly entertains the impression that such will yet be the case. Grattan Elton travels much at home and abroad; that one object is ever uppermost in his mind, and who shall say the day of expiation shall not come? Although four years have now elapsed since the discovery and flight of Sefton, and although not the slightest clue to his whereabouts has transpired, I have little doubt, unless he has quitted the country, that he is at the present moment in some part of the kingdom, under an assumed name, by means of his rare talents and accomplishments, practising some successful piece of villany.

The following lines were pencilled near Edith Elton's grave by one who, in her death, lost one of the brightest gems from the circle of his friendships; who will ever cherish her remembrance whilst memory is his to recal the past, and whilst he may, on the wings of imagination, defeat fate and time by living by-gone hours again :—

"Thou of the soft blue eye,"
That 'neath this massive time-worn slab art sleeping,
Not 'lone I sigh,
Around thy earthly bed the night winds, sweeping,
Wail in their flight o'er thee, sad requiem keeping.

Sweet flower for whom
On worship border'd kindred's love, so deep
In rayless gloom;
Aye! thou hast left them o'er thy flight to weep,
And one whose sorrow is for tears too deep.

Thou wert his child;
Yet since thy death, of thee he hath not spoken—
He hath not smiled
Since unto him thy parting words were spoken;
Soon will he follow, for his heart is broken.*

Thou of footstep light,
Whose voice was joyous as a woodland bird
When took its flight
To realms above thy spirit—hosts were stirred,
And in rejoicings was thy welcome heard.

Yes, thou art blest,
If sages of the earth have told us true;
A purer guest
Than thy young spotless spirit never flew
To halls of light beyond yon spangled blue.

* Some few months after his daughter's death, my esteemed friend, Mr. Elton, was borne to his last home.

ISABELLA BURTON.

A TALE OF LOVE.

"My dear, you will lose him altogether, if you do not take care!"

"I don't mind; it is not in my nature to submit to it, and he knows that very well."

"But you must admit that you give him ample cause for fault-finding."

"If I do, what then? Are not lovers bound to bear all that their ladies choose to inflict upon them? I am not married to him yet, and I never will be, so long as he evinces so unamiable a temper. It was enough for him that I accepted his offer, and I shall now do just as I please. Oh, that I lived in the age of chivalry, when a gallant knight looked up to his lady as to a 'star apart,' and risked his very life to fulfil her slightest behests! Those were the times when women were valued as they ought to be."

"I am not very learned in history, but I fancy, my dear Isabella, you would have met with compensating inconveniences in those days of convents and lawless tyranny. But to return to the point in question. You really must carry your haughty head a little lower, and restrain your wild spirits. You cannot think how I pitied Mr. Lennox last night, when you were whispering so long, under the orange-tree in the conservatory, with young Wilson, just after you had treated *him* with the utmost scorn."

"Well, I did it on purpose. What business had Frederic to hint that I should not dance so often when others were sitting still? If girls *will* be stupid and ugly, I can't help that; they may continue wallflowers for me. And for him to notice what became of them when he ought to have been entirely occupied with me! I shall teach the young gentleman better in a short time, or——"

And Isabella Burton tossed her magnificent head, and walked out of the room. Her companion looked after her with a sigh, and then resumed her work.

Miss Burton was the belle of Shepperton, a country town in the north of England. Her father, a wealthy mill-owner, desirous that she should have an education which he considered suitable to her fine abilities, and the large fortune he intended for her, had sent her to a fashionable boarding-school in London, and from this she had emerged with her good qualities exaggerated into bad ones, if we may use so strong an expression. She had formerly been a pleasant little girl, with a remarkably truthful and independent character. Her liveliness had now degenerated into a kind of daring levity, her truthfulness into the remorseless uttering of bitter words whenever she chose to be severe, her independence into an excessive hauteur and self-will. The whole town of Shepperton was busy with her name; and though this notoriety, together with her queenly beauty, at first attracted lovers, they were, one by one, disgusted with her airs, and only thought of amusing themselves by flirting with her. To this general defalcation Frederic Lennox was the only exception. Deeply smitten by her charms, he had courage and resolution enough to undertake her reformation. He had, as we have seen, succeeded in his suit to her, and he now persevered, at the cost of severe heartache, and many a

moment of despairing bitterness, in pointing out her glaring faults. Her vexation at his plain-dealing was so great, that she would often have given up her engagement with him, had she not been restrained by the esteem that she could not avoid yielding to his manly qualities, and the real affection for him that lurked at the bottom of her heart. Besides, there was something in his very sincerity, however disagreeable to her, that harmonised with the natural nobility of her character; and she experienced a sensation of gratitude for his steadfast love which *the woman* cherished, though *the beauty* as carefully concealed.

The young lady to whose gentle remonstrances Miss Burton had, as was usual with her, turned a deaf ear, was a cousin to whom she was much attached, and who had been admitted by Mr. Burton into his own family, with the double purpose of assisting his widowed sister, who had two other daughters, and of giving his spoiled and only child an amiable companion. Mary Graham was of Scotch extraction on the father's side, and her mild blue eyes, her light curling hair, and the clear red and white of her complexion, formed a charming contrast with her cousin's more brilliant loveliness.

Miss Graham was not destined to be long left in peace this morning. Isabella had not quitted the room a quarter of an hour, when the door opened, and Frederic Lennox entered unannounced. His brow was unusually clouded, and he seemed rather relieved than otherwise to find Isabella absent. Truth to tell, he was not sorry to have an opportunity of disclosing his irritated feelings to the sympathising ear of Mary Graham, whom he had ever found a judicious confidante; rather a perilous position this for a maiden with a loving and disengaged heart. We shall see how Mary stood the test.

"You saw, last night," began the lover, in hesitating accents.

His listener bowed her head.

"Miss Graham, I have almost made up my mind. Isabella is one to whom I shall never dare to commit the happiness of my life. I have tried all that patience and sincerity, combined with the deepest devotion, can do, and I begin to despair. The way in which she went on with that booby, young Wilson! I can bear it no longer. She does not love me: I will release her. And yet, what would I not give to hear her say one really affectionate word! I cannot free myself from the chains which her fascinations have thrown around me. Oh, misery! misery to her and to me!" And the wretched young man buried his face in his hands.

Mary Graham seemed struggling with some strange emotion. Her bosom rose and fell, and her cheek was now pale as a lily, and anon suffused with the deepest crimson; while her compressed lips, like crushed roses, showed the effort she made to conceal her feelings. At length she succeeded in mastering them so far as to reply, in a calm voice, that bore no evidence of the struggle within,

"Mr. Lennox, you must not judge entirely by what you see. Isabella's pride alone sustains her in her defiance of you. In reality she loves you, loves you dearly; and, contradictory as it may appear, the sincerity for which she quarrels with you is the very quality that holds her most deeply attached. She only wants more deference, a kind of chivalric gallantry, such as is seldom met with in the present day. Isabella is very romantic, notwithstanding the chilling atmosphere of a London school, and has a high opinion of her sex, and this is the source whence arises so much that

displeases you. She is a noble girl at heart, and so you will find if you have a little more patience. She is very young. In a few years she will sober down, and become all that you can wish."

"Ah! Miss Graham, you are a warm and persuasive advocate for your cousin, but I fear you judge her by your own gentle heart and pure feelings. It is not romance alone, or, if it be, it is a kind of romance with which I would willingly dispense, that prompts Isabella to behave in a manner so distressing to those who truly esteem her, and wish to see her bright in womanly graces as she is in queenly attractions. Yes, I am determined upon it. I will try her a little longer, and if there be no amendment, I will tear my heart from hers, whatever it may cost her or me. Anything would be better than this lingering agony."

A light footstep was heard upon the stairs as he concluded, and before either could recover their composure, the object of their conversation entered. She seemed in the best possible humour, and never had looked more lovely, but she stopped short when she had advanced half-way up the room, and scrutinised the agitated countenances before her. It had been a subject for a painter: that elegant apartment, with the sun's rays streaming in softened lustre through the rose-tinted window-curtains, and falling full on the imperial form that seemed to float upon the air, so beautiful was the attitude in which it had arrested itself. The full lips were slightly parted, disclosing the perfect teeth within, and the large dark eye was fixed in amazement that suddenly flashed into scorn, while the glorious hair encircled the small imperious head as with a natural coronet. Mary sat somewhat in the shade, her head bent low to conceal her quivering lips and tearful eyes; but Frederic's noble countenance was exactly opposite the light that revealed the workings of his features, now gradually subsiding into a calm marble stateliness, as he marked the changing expression of his mistress's eye. At length the spell was broken, and the bitter words flowed forth.

"I beg your pardon for my abrupt entrance. I really was not aware that I was interrupting so interesting a conversation. Pray, Mr. Frederic Lennox, may I entreat you will proceed with your remarks, and not mind me. Or, if you *particularly* wish to be alone, I shall be happy to leave the room. You are silent. Perhaps, Miss Graham, *you* are prepared with an answer?"

Mary rose from her seat, pale as ashes. "Isabella," she murmured, "you are unjust. I leave you together, perhaps you will then come to a better understanding."

"Mary, I command you to stay. I have nothing, and shall henceforth have nothing to say to Mr. Lennox, that the whole world may not hear. Frederic, I have long noted your wavering affection; you can see nothing but faults in me, and as I am not disposed to alter or restrain my natural inclinations for any man in the world, and least of all for *you*, who ought to worship my very imperfections ——"

Frederic interrupted her. "You release me from my engagement. Be it so, Miss Burton. I accept my liberty." And he left the room.

Oh, woman! how contradictory art thou. Of what an entangled web of various and conflicting feelings is thy being composed! Isabella had been sustained by the haughtiness of her nature throughout the preceding scene, but now that her lover was really gone, gone for ever, an acute pain stung her heart, and the proud beauty would willingly have knelt at

the feet of him whom she had banished, and implored his pity. She rushed to the door and down the stairs with a vague intention of calling him back, heedless of the wondering looks of the man-servant whom she met on her way. Just as she reached the hall, the outer door closed—it was too late. She returned to the drawing-room, and wept as if her heart would break. In a few days she heard that Frederic Lennox had departed for the Continent.

Many were the conjectures of the good people of Shepperton as to the reason of the sudden rupture of the engagement. Some ascribed it to Isabella's open flirtations; others said that she had dismissed her lover because she did not consider him good enough for her, for she had the pride of a duchess; and this latter opinion seemed to receive confirmation from her brilliant appearance at a public ball the evening after Frederic's departure became known, upon which occasion she flirted more desperately than ever. A close observer might have discerned a tinge of bitterness in her lively conversation, an effort in her excessive laughter, an occasional rising of tears that would not be repressed, and an unnatural flushing on her cheek and brow. But the little world of the ball-room saw nothing of all this, and things passed off extremely well, until, late in the evening, in the midst of a gay quadrille, Isabella suddenly pressed her hand to her head, and the next moment was carried out fainting. She was ill for many weeks; from over-exertion, the gossips said, though some shook their heads, and connected it all with Frederic's extraordinary flight. They never ascertained exactly how it was, for Isabella Burton appeared among them no more.

Just about this time Mr. Burton retired from business, sold his beautiful residence, and went with his daughter and niece to live in the south of England. And here we, as well as their neighbours at Shepperton, lose sight of them for several years.

It was a beautiful morning in early spring; the hawthorns were budding, and the birds warbling their sweetest songs, as an elegant female figure in slight mourning wended her way along the green lanes and beneath the tall hedges, towards a little village in the county of Sussex. Having reached its one street, she passed like an angelic visitant from house to house, blessing the inhabitants by a kind word or a timely alms, praying by the bedside of the sick, and raising the depressed spirits of the lonely and heart-stricken. As she disappeared into the last house, a tall young man, wrapped in a large military cloak, strode quickly by it, and out at the other end of the street. The lady soon followed, unconscious that her motions were watched by a pair of kind blue eyes from behind the sturdy stem of an old and picturesque oak that spread its gnarled branches over the stile which she crossed on her way into the fields. She walked on in deep meditation, the cloaked figure following at some distance, and then turned into a small grove or plantation, directing her steps towards a moss-grown monument that crumbled in its midst. Here, for the first time, she looked round, and perceived the stranger behind her. Her immediate impulse was to hurry onwards, but something in the gait of the unknown arrested her flight, and she paused, trembling and quite still, until he came up to her. He threw aside his cloak, and Isabella Burton, uttering a wild scream, sank to the ground, for Frederic Lennox, the long-lost and deeply-lamented, stood before her.

The young man took her gently in his arms, and carried her to the side of a little brook that flowed through the plantation, where, by dint of sprinkling her face with water, and rubbing her small cold hands, and still more by the words of enraptured tenderness that he breathed into her ear, he succeeded in recovering her from the deep swoon in which life itself seemed drowned. The lovers, for such they truly were, though time, and change, and bitter feelings had passed between them, sat down on the lowest step of the monument. Pass we over the first tearful caresses and rapid explanations. Isabella at length roused herself from her entrancement.

"And how, dear Frederic," said she, "did you find me out?"

"It was with much trouble that I did so, sweetest; but at length I was fortunate enough to meet with an old friend of your father's, and he told me all that had happened, and where you were now residing."

"And how—how—did you know—that I——"

"That you—what? dear Isabella," asked the young man, smiling at her evident embarrassment.

"In short, that I was not so naughty a girl as I used to be," whispered the once saucy beauty, leaning her head on her lover's shoulder, and looking affectionately into his face.

"Of that I assured myself before I ventured to appear before you," answered Frederic, accompanying his words by a little ceremony that we will not mention. "I have lodged in the village for two days, and I have heard enough in that time to assure me that I might claim your acquaintance without being summarily dismissed by the title, 'Mr. Lennox,' and a frown."

"Impertinent that you are! thus to make yourself sure of me beforehand. I have a great mind to walk home to poor dear Mary, and leave you to do as you can;" and Isabella, with a little toss of the head that brought her former haughty self forcibly to the mind of her companion, rose from her seat. But a loving hand restrained her, and she was induced to sit down and listen with a glowing cheek to Frederic's ardent praises of the self-denial and benevolence of which he had heard and seen so much amongst her poorer neighbours.

"What were you saying about poor dear Mary?" asked the lover, after one of those pauses in which silence is eloquence. "Does she still reside with you?"

"Yes, since my poor father's death she has been my only companion, with the exception of a good old lady who lives with me as housekeeper and humble friend. But, oh! Frederic, she is so changed since you saw her. You would not know her now."

"Indeed! What is the matter with her?"

"I do not know; her disorder has puzzled all the doctors. Just about the time when I fell ill, after you, dearest Frederic, had been driven away by my detestable conduct, as I feared for ever, Mary began to lose strength and appetite. Their anxiety about me prevented her state of health coming under observation, and when I in some degree recovered, I found her fearfully altered. She is now wasted almost to a skeleton, and unable to leave her bed."

Frederic appeared to fall into a deep reverie. He at length roused himself with a sigh, for Isabella was gazing upon him with a tender scrutiny, and said,

"I now remember that the good old woman, my hostess, mentioned something of a young lady being ill at your house, but as soon as I ascertained that it was not you, I paid no further attention to the circumstance, being too much occupied in inquiring about her whom I was so anxious to see again. Poor Mary!"

The sun was declining in the heavens before the reconciled lovers became conscious how many hours had passed in blissful communion. Arm-in-arm they left the grove, and took their way towards Isabella's dwelling. It was a pretty rustic cottage, and in the summer season a perfect bower of roses and honeysuckles. Now, in the simply laid-out garden, crocuses and snowdrops were giving promise of more brilliant adorning, and the tiny lawn was bordered with budding lilacs, pink hawthorns, and mezereons, and the sweet-scented American currant-tree. But silence reigned in the house—a silence that fell like a horror upon the lovers as they entered. Isabella hastened up-stairs, fearing that her cousin was worse. She found the nurse asleep by the fireside, and the afflicted girl sitting up in bed in a state of the utmost excitement.

"Isabella, who is come with you? I know his step, I know his voice. Isabella, Frederic Lennox is returned, and I am dying! Oh! let me see him once more!" and she stretched out her arms in an agony of supplication.

Isabella was thunderstruck. She had had no idea of this. Mary, then, was dying for love of *her* lover, her Frederic! She had but time to admit the bewildering conviction, for Mary again addressed her with frenzied eagerness.

"Forgive me, Isabella, I am dying. Oh! let me see Frederic once more. I have never, even in intention, injured you. Quick! quick! or it will be too late. Entreat him not to delay. Oh, Isabella! fly, fly!"

Frederic was summoned to the darkened chamber, where youth and happiness were being offered up on the altar of the past. Some murmured words of tenderness, a few tears, a faint pressure of the hand, a fond rapt gaze upon the countenance of the beloved, that gradually subsided into the cold glassy stare of a corpse, and the pure soul had fled to its native heaven, ere those who were around knew that life had departed. A smile still lingered upon the lips, and in that hour of death, beauty returned, an awful beauty, like that of a dreaming archangel.

Isabella gave six months to the memory of the sweet girl who had died for hopeless love of him whom she herself loved with so deep and true an affection. A mild October morning witnessed the union of the tried hearts, whose devotion had survived bitter offence, and change, and sorrow, and harmonised well with the pensive joy of the bride. Isabella was altered, indeed, and a long life passed in the exercise of all the virtues that exalt and endear a wife and mother, proved to her adoring husband how right poor Mary Graham had been in her early judgment of her cousin's character.

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

By Madame Paalzow.

Chapter XXI.

These ten years had produced great alterations in the old house of the Purmurands.

Angela's health had long been on the decline, and at length her gentle spirit fled from this world of trial. It was about a year since she had been laid beside her mother, and Floris was left alone to take care of poor old decrepit Susa and of Van der Néess, who had become a great sufferer from the gout, and thus led a miserable life.

The death of his wife had proved once more how deep and true had been his affection to her; his frantic despair brought him to the brink of the grave, and poor Floris was obliged to overcome her own bitter sorrow, in order to soothe him by her affectionate attentions and gentle exhortations.

Time had somewhat reconciled him to his loss, and restored him to his former self; and, as age and the gout are not calculated to improve such dispositions as his, our readers will not find him more amiable than before.

It was the close of an autumn day—Van der Néess was seated in the old banqueting-room, closely wrapped up in furs and blankets; yet the attack of gout, which had given rise to all these precautions, had passed off, and he was in unusual good-humour. As he had become very sensible to the cold, he was wont to indulge himself with a fire in the evenings, even though the spring was now advancing; but, to save expense, generally insisted on having his evening meal prepared in the room, that the fire on the great hearth in the hall might be extinguished.

On this evening, as usual, the maid was engaged in that process. Van der Néess had long been tormented by an anxious desire to dismiss her, and would often tear his hair in despair of being able to accomplish this; but his devoted admiration for Floris's taper fingers and delicate complexion withheld him; for he saw no other alternative, in case he sent away the maid, than to charge Floris with her duties, as age and infirmities had rendered Susa imbecile and helpless.

Floris, who had just completed her sixteenth year, was seated beside the large oaken table in the middle of the apartment.

We cannot tell whether Urica was as beautiful as her young relative at that age, for we did not become acquainted with her till she was about two-and-twenty; but Floris certainly possessed one advantage which Urica did not acquire till after her marriage with Lord Fawcett—the expression of feminine softness, love, and gentleness, which dwelt on her beaming countenance. The atmosphere of purity which she had breathed till the death of her mother, and the anxious solicitude of the latter to guard her from evil, had prevented the bitter, scornful sneer, that once curled Urica's lip, from ever disfiguring Floris's lovely features. Yet she, too, had known sorrow—she had watched beside the sick-bed, and witnessed the decease of her beloved mother; and the deep affliction of her adored aunt, Urica, had made a great impression on her young heart,

for the early development of her mind soon rendered her capable of entering into all the circumstances.

She was as tall as her aunt; her figure was graceful and sylph-like, and her sunny hair was disposed in rich braids around her lovely head. The colour varied on her cheek; it was not the steady hue of health, yet the delicacy of this tinge was the admiration of connoisseurs, and its effect was increased by her deep blue eyes, with their black silken lashes and eyebrows.

Her attire was rich and elegant. Van der Néess was no longer able to skip and jump about in his excitement, for his legs were crippled and swollen; but he substituted for this very ominous symptom, a practice of drumming on the table with his fingers, and humming or singing in the most repulsive manner. Angela's regular allowance was continued to Floris, through Mynherr van Marseeven's intervention; yet many a time when she appeared before her father in some new article of dress, which she had innocently procured by this means, Van der Néess would utter such strange dissonant sounds, and knock his fingers so fiercely and painfully against the chairs and tables, that those who knew him easily discerned his old inclination to rave and rage to be as strong as ever.

But Floris possessed the heavenly gift of cherishing and preserving those feelings which cement the holiest ties of human nature. She was perfectly conscious of all her father's failings, but either did not know, or would not apply the true name to them. The natural impulse of her heart had taught her, without any premeditated plan, to bear with him, and treat him with affectionate consideration. She had gained great ascendancy over him, and often employed it, partly in jest and partly from motives of filial love and gentle compassion, often urging her opinions with the virtuous pathos of youth—so touching when it is the offspring of a pure and pious heart.

Van der Néess would often weep, and writhe in agony like a convicted criminal, when this angel of light stood before him, and with touching earnestness, admonished him to desist from some action or other he had resolved on. On such occasions he would anxiously promise to do all she desired; the relative position of father and child was reversed, yet the blessing of God seemed to rest on this connexion.

After such scenes, Floris ever loved her father even better than before, and would strive by every means in her power to prove her affection to him, till at length he seemed ready to go mad with joy. But Floris could not, without a feeling of shame, behold the wild excess of merriment in which he would then indulge; for it fearfully betrayed his coarse nature, and the feelings thus excited threatened to endanger her affection for him more than the primary, and often serious, cause of such a scene.

Cornelius Hooft, who bore the most tender love and affection to this lovely girl, was seated beside her. He was ever ready to offer his services to Floris, as a companion and escort; and as she could scarcely cross the streets without attracting admiration, in a manner often both embarrassing and disagreeable, his companionship was very acceptable to her.

On the evening in question, Mynherr Hooft was giving Van der Néess and Floris an account of the festivities that had lately taken place at the Hague, on the joint occasion of the English king's return to that city, and the marriage of a niece of the Prince of Orange to Prince George of Anhalt. Floris listened to him, with her sweet angelic smile, and

asked many a question regarding the youthful bride. Cornelius spoke of her beauty, and dwelt on the marked attentions which had been paid her by the king.

"I confess," said Floris, "I feel but little interest about this King Charles. It is well for him I was not the princess; I should soon have showed him he was neglecting his duty, in feasting and dancing away here, while his people are expecting him on the shores yonder, and vainly straining their eyes to catch a glimpse of him."

Van der Néess chuckled and nodded approvingly. He was much pleased at Floris's speech, for he cherished an innate aversion to all spendthrifts; and at that period not much was known of the young king beyond his propensity to extravagance.

"Well said, my little Floris," cried Néess; "you are quite right; and mark my words, his purse will soon be empty once more. He has just received 50,000*l.* sterling. Well, I'm sure, in common justice, not a penny of that money ought to pass out of the country. There are those here who have more right to it than this king himself. 50,000*l.*! Just ask your aunt Urica whether he has ever redeemed her castles and estates, or repaid the sums she lavished on his cause."

"Father," said Floris, "you know aunt Urica does not wish that to be spoken of, so pray say no more."

"Why not?" cried Van der Néess, abruptly. "Ha! this haughty dame would make one believe she had never done a foolish thing in all her life. I'll tell you why she wants us to hold our tongues; it is that sensible people may not sneer and point at her, and her departed Lord Earl of Fawcett, and say, 'Pride cometh to a fall.'"

"Oh, father," said Floris, turning very pale, and resting her head on her hand, "it is not kind of you to wound my feelings so. You know I can never hear you speak harshly of my aunt, or poor dear Lord Fawcett, without being ready to burst into tears."

"Well, well," cried Van der Néess, uneasily; "you know I did not mean to hurt you. You should know better, little, foolish thing. But," cried he, in a sudden access of rage, as he saw Floris wiping away her tears, "I *will* say it, that haughty aunt of yours—confound her!—is the bane of all our happiness. What do you cry for, my child? Dry your tears—dry them, I say—for you waste them on those who don't deserve them—who steal your heart from me. There's your aunt, I know, strives every day to wean your affections from me; and to think of your crying now for that earl, who has been dead these ten years, and whom you knew only when you were quite a child! Well, Heaven have mercy on your poor father! I should like to see if you would cry for him when he has been dead ten years."

"Have you lost your senses altogether, Néess?" cried Hooft, indignantly. "Could not you be satisfied when you saw the poor child had dried her tears, but you must needs go on till you make her begin afresh? Inconsiderate, hot-headed old man that you are, will you never learn to control your choleric temper?"

Van der Néess was silent, and cast an uneasy glance at Floris. To divert her attention, Hooft proposed giving her an account of the festivities that were soon to take place in Amsterdam, as the young King of England purposed visiting the city, in company with the Prince and Princess of Anhalt. Floris smilingly nodded assent, and rose to

arrange Van der Néess' blankets, as his uneasy movements had displaced them.

"I am afraid," said she, looking kindly at him, "you feel cold, my dear father."

"No, no, my darling; no, not in the least," said Néess, in a subdued voice, looking very penitent. "Only do give your little, soft, white hand to your poor old father."

Floris immediately ran up to him, threw her arms around his neck, and smiled kindly as she bent over him with filial affection.

Hooft cleared his throat, to overcome his emotion, and commenced his narrative. He spoke first of the triumphal arches, temples, and pagodas that had been erected on the highway and in the city, and dwelt on a variety of new devices, fantastic dances, and pantomimic shows that had been invented, for the amusement of the visitors. At length he came to a favourite plan he had himself suggested; this was, that twenty of the young maidens of Amsterdam, attired in white dresses, with flowing ribbons and flowers, should go out to meet the king and princess, and the most beautiful of them be deputed to offer a wreath to the princess.

Floris thought this idea charming, without the slightest suspicion that the sly sheriff, well knowing her to be the most beautiful of the maidens, had destined her to this honour. She timidly expressed a desire to see this procession; but Van der Néess began to drum loudly on the table, and she forbore to press her request.

Hooft went on to speak of the costly presents to be offered by the city to the illustrious visitors, and the sums expended in the magnificent preparations for this visit.

Van der Néess listened attentively; for though he thought the whole proceeding absurd in the extreme, he loved to hear of the immense expense it occasioned, and for a moment flattered himself with a hope that all those concerned therein would beggar themselves, and give him—the only rich man who had not spent a doit in such absurdities—the satisfaction of refusing their applications.

Floris and Van der Néess at length sat down to their evening repast; yet Hooft lingered. He had evidently some design in view, for he spoke of the mildness of the evening, and inquired whether Floris had been out of doors that day. On being answered in the negative, he blamed her for her laziness, and declared that must account for her looking so pale.

Néess eagerly devoured his soup, now and then casting an uneasy glance at Floris; for he was at least as cunning as Hooft, and at once observed that his drift was to take her out, probably either to her aunt or Madame van Marseeven; and Van der Néess did not by any means relish her visit to either. Nothing short of his solicitude regarding Floris's health could induce him to consent to her going, for he did not like her becoming accustomed to so much amusement; yet he could not avoid remarking that, when she returned from such visits, her spirits were raised, and her cheek suffused with a brighter glow.

When Van der Néess had finished his supper, Caas, who had grown into a robust young man, entered, to carry him up-stairs to his room. This was a most thankless office; for Van der Néess, impatient, and irritated at his helpless condition, bestowed many a hard cuff and harsh imprecation on his ill-fated bearer.

"Are you going to bed now, Van der Néess?" said Hooft. "Well,

that is very early; the sun has not yet set. It is such a lovely evening, you must let me take Floris to her aunt, that she may have some exercise, and a little air, to colour those pale cheeks of hers."

"What! take Floris out at this hour!" shrieked Van der Néess, impetuously pushing Caas aside, in order to fix a suspicious glance on Floris and her friend. "Nonsense! I cannot allow her to acquire such bad customs and unprofitable habits. Has not she her flowers, her birds, and her lute, to amuse her with? What more can she want?"

"Very true," said Hooft; "but she cannot take sufficient exercise in that little court. And, trust me, that is the reason she is growing so pale and thin. No girl of her age can stand such a life."

Van der Néess was silent, for this speech of Hooft's had weakened the force of his resistance. Our readers must know that this little scene was one of frequent occurrence. Van der Néess never failed to give way at last, after he had indulged himself in venting his irritation on Hooft; but the latter turned a deaf ear to all his offensive speeches, and would not suffer himself to be put out of temper, while Floris rewarded him for his forbearance with one of her sweetest smiles.

On this occasion, as usual, she wound up the scene by approaching her father, and kissing his coarse hand, saying, with an angelic smile, as she wished him good night, "You give me leave to go, don't you, dear father?"

Van der Néess screwed up his face, as if a sudden twinge of the gout had seized him, or Caas laid hold of him too rudely, muttered something to himself, and sighed, but made no further objections. However, when Caas carried him up-stairs, and put him to bed, he desired him not to dawdle away his time in the house, but to make haste and follow his young mistress, and see that she came home in safety.

It was a long way to the Countess of Fawcett's, for she had taken up her residence in one of the suburbs of the city.

Mynherr van Marseeven had succeeded in obtaining from the young king an acknowledgment of Urica's claims; yet, hitherto, no settlement had been made. In consequence, Urica had sold her palace, at the Hague, and all her jewels. After making a handsome present to the Countess Comenes, for whom she procured the situation of governess to the Princess of Orange, she purchased a small house and garden on the outskirts of the town, and lived there with a few old faithful domestics, on the slender proceeds of her little capital.

Floris's visits ever occasioned her the greatest delight, for the warm affection and tender sympathy of this lovely girl soothed her wounded heart. There was still the same grace and poetry of motion about Floris, as, when in the days of childish delusion, she danced in the moonshine, and her light step scarce left a trace upon the damp sand along which she was walking.

At length she arrived with her conductor at the place of her destination, and, lifting the latch of a little wicker gate, they entered a low avenue shaded by young beech-trees, whose branches were drawn across a slight frame-work and arched overhead. A lady in deep mourning was walking down this avenue, in whom our readers would with difficulty recognise the once haughty and dazzling Countess Urica.

Her step was slow, and betrayed great bodily weakness, yet her figure was erect, and her manner noble and dignified as ever; a sweet melan-

cholv smile lit up her pale countenance, as she perceived Floris, and she kindly sought to dispel the uneasiness the latter expressed regarding her health. Every succeeding month of May seemed to weaken the frail thread of her life—for it was the anniversary of Lord Fawcett's execution —and poor Floris was shocked at the ravages sad recollections had this time made in Urica's appearance.

To divert her attention from such melancholy considerations, Urica kindly expressed a desire to hear an account of the approaching festivities in the city; and Hooft recommenced his narratives. When he came to his plan of the procession of maidens, Urica applauded the ingenuity of the idea, and Floris began to consider who among her acquaintances would be selected for this purpose. Madame van Marseeven's two unmarried daughters were naturally the first she remembered, but she never thought of being among them herself.

"Certainly," said Hooft, "Madame van Marseeven's daughters will be of the party, provided their mother's situation does not become more critical."

"Is there any reason to fear that?" said Urica, in a sympathising tone. "Gracious God! will she depart before me?"

"The physicians think her days are numbered," replied Hooft; "yet she does not suffer much. She is seldom confined to her bed, and has the perfect use of her understanding. But her daughters dislike joining in any amusement, and are loath to leave their mother for a moment; while Van Marseeven has been pestered every day with applications for his daughters' assistance, and you may imagine how his heart revolts at all these festivities, for the bustle of these preparations often obliges him to be long absent from his wife, and he hears of nothing but joy and hilarity while he is heart-broken at the thought of his approaching separation from his noble and excellent wife. Indeed, if you have not seen him during the last few weeks, you would scarcely recognise him, he is so much altered in appearance.

"Yet," resumed Hooft, after a pause, "Madame van Marseeven is the same kind considerate person as ever, and anxious to divert the thoughts of her sorrowing husband and children; she enters into all these plans and arrangements, and, guided by the refined taste for which she has ever been distinguished, suggests many an alteration and improvement in the plan of proceeding. She also charged me to speak to you about persuading Van der Néess to allow Floris to take a part in these festivities, as we have chosen her to offer the wreath to the princess."

"Me, Mynherr Hooft?" cried Floris, both pleased and alarmed. "Are you serious? What right have I to such an honour? you know I cannot boast of high birth, nor is my father one of the great merchants or bankers of the city."

"Hum," said Cornelius, with a significant smile, "that won't be any difficulty in this case; the qualifications required are of a somewhat different nature; but you need not disturb yourself on that point. Madame van Marseeven would not have thought of you had there been any objection; and further, I must tell you, that her husband named you to the committee appointed to conduct the festivities, and his proposal was unanimously agreed to."

"But," continued Floris, "there is my youngest cousin Van Marseeven, who is both noble and beautiful, and but little older than I am; she

would be a more suitable person, and depend upon it all the old families in town would deem it an outrage to their daughters, if a girl like me, who can neither plead high birth nor an ancient name, were to receive the preference. I know how much importance they attach to such things, for I have often heard those girls talk of them at Madame van Marseeven's house, whenever she was not present. What do you say to all this, aunt Urica?"

"Why," said the latter smiling, "if it come to talk of such unimportant things as birth and connexions, you may plead your relationship to two of the most distinguished families in the land; for you know your grandmother, my sister, was a Casambort, and Madame van Marseeven, also, is a near relation of mine, therefore it is very probable they have considered you as belonging to the ancient families of the town."

"My poor father!" said Floris, thoughtfully. "Do you know, aunt, it always makes me sad to hear these things spoken of—it is not the first time; for while poor Susa had the use of her understanding she was always harping on the same string. But you cannot think how sad I felt when I looked at my poor father; I thought she wished to tear me from him, and he appeared to me so forlorn and deserted. I loved him all the more in the anxiety of my heart, for was not I his true and lawful child who bore his name? And yet it appeared she wished me to think myself above him, who loved me so fondly, and has ever been so kind to me; how wicked that would have been! I can scarcely think it possible; and neither you nor my mother ever desired or hinted at such a thing."

"Your noble-minded mother was far superior to me in that respect," said Urica, with generous candour. "It was from her I learnt to view your situation in its true light. I confess I was once on the point of committing a serious error, but her purity and virtuous firmness preserved me from it. I see she has implanted a right feeling in your mind; nature impels you to love your father, and your disposition has not been polluted by the vain frivolous aspirations of the world."

"I can easily imagine that you would agree with my mother," returned Floris; "but you must stand by me in this matter, for I am determined not to accept this honourable distinction, if it is bestowed on me in consideration of my high connexions. If the daughter of my poor father, Van der Néess, is not eligible to the honour, the niece of the Countess Fawcett will not stir from your side."

"What do you say to that, Hooft?" exclaimed Urica, glancing at Floris with proud satisfaction. "Don't you admire such noble pride?"

Hooft, as usual, was in a transport of admiration, and could scarcely command his emotion.

"Hem," said he, clearing his throat with an effort as he settled his cravat, "the girl is not aware how completely she betrays her high descent by such feelings. My noble, high-minded, Floris," he said, unable to disguise his emotion; "do not give yourself any uneasiness on this subject—we all know we must not address you by any other title than Floris van der Néess; so now, my little proud spirit, listen to me! The sheriff, Cornelius Hooft, is deputed by the good city of Amsterdam to request Miss Floris van der Néess, daughter of the merchant Jacob van der Néess, will be pleased to take a part in the approaching festivities, and present a wreath to the princess, with an address befitting the occasion."

Hooft delivered himself of this speech with mock gravity, and accom-

panied it with a series of deferential bows and humorous gestures. Floris, infinitely amused at this, dropped a low curtsey and replied in the same style, and, though she spoke half in jest, what she said might have been repeated to the high functionaries of Amsterdam as a modest and fitting reply to their invitation.

"That is to say," she added, in conclusion, "provided the good old merchant, Jacob Van der Néess, will give his consent to his daughter's accepting this invitation."

"Oh! I'll answer for him!—leave that to me, dear Floris," said Hooft; "and, to-morrow, you must go to Madame van Marseeven's house and get your measure taken for your dress of white silk; then, with a white veil, and a net of pearls on your head, and a sprig of orange blossoms twined in among the braids of your hair, you, little rogue! will look so bewitching, that even our old hearts will dance with joy, and your young admirers must lose theirs altogether."

Floris smiled, but, as she turned to Urica, she was struck by the air of exhaustion on her pale features. Ulla, her faithful maid, made some very intelligible signs to Floris from behind her mistress's chair, expressing her desire that the latter should be left alone now; and Floris, fearful of exciting her aunt too much, took an affectionate leave of her, and returned home under the escort of Hooft and Caas, whom she found stationed at the gate.

Hooft was mistaken in imagining that Van der Néess would readily give his consent to his daughter's forming one of the deputation of maidens, for many an angry scene resulted from the sheriff's urgent application. Though Van der Néess was flattered by the distinction conferred on his daughter, and the tacit conviction thus expressed, that she was the most beautiful maiden in the city, and though he loved her so dearly, and anticipated with ridiculous delight the idea of seeing her so beautifully dressed, these feelings struggled with his anxious fear of incurring expense, and attracting too much attention to his wealth.

But Hooft, perceiving at length that there was no reasoning the miser out of his miserable objections, settled the matter by threatening him with the severe displeasure of the chief burgomaster, in case he demurred any longer. Jacob said no more, and Floris repaired to Madame van Marseeven's house, to have her measure taken, in company with her cousins, for the dresses to be worn on this occasion.

It would be scarcely possible to imagine a more lovely sight than Floris on the morning of the eventful day, when resplendent with youth and beauty she entered the gloomy old banqueting room, where her father was seated. We have before alluded to the judicious choice of attire prescribed on this occasion, but it was not equally becoming to all who wore it, for none had so many charms to increase its effect as Floris.

The orange blossoms, with their dark leaves, were entwined with much taste in the braids of her sunny hair, which, descending on her soft cheek, was then disposed at the back of her head beneath a net of pearls, from which a veil of the most transparent gauze descended through a ring over her shoulders, and mingled with the folds of her white silk dress.

Van der Néess, of his own accord, produced Angela's pearls; and wept aloud for joy when he saw his darling adorned with them; but he made her bend down again and again to examine the magnificent clasps of the necklace and bracelets, and assure himself they were well fastened.

He said he was sure she would not bring back these ornaments with her; but charged her, in case they were lost or stolen, to say they were not hers, but her aunt Urica's. His anxiety was so great that, when Floris was gone, he sent Caas after her with a last exhortation, "to be sure and feel for the clasps of her pearls very often, because he was seriously afraid he should never see them again," and the breathless messenger reached her just as she was descending from the carriage at Madame van Marseeven's door.

Floris and her companions were stationed without the city gates, in order to avoid being annoyed by the curiosity of the mob that crowded the streets. A number of orange-trees and flowering shrubs had been transported thither, so as to form a mimic grove, and beneath its shade the beautiful maidens awaited the arrival of the illustrious guests. This was a happy thought, for it had been previously arranged that they should descend from their carriages at this place, to partake of some refreshment, and thus they gained full leisure to receive the addresses and offerings of the nymphs of this moveable grove.

At length the royal visitors arrived. The Princess of Anhalt entered the refreshing shade of the bosquet, walking between the King of England and her young husband.

"What an enchanting sight!" she cried, looking round in delighted surprise. "Can these be mortals, or are they angels from heaven?"

"These are the wonders," said the king, in an ecstasy, "which Holland alone can bring forth—a specimen of its unparalleled beauties. Gracious princess, accept the homage of your countrywomen!"

"No, no," replied the princess, bowing to the king; "I have no right to that. It is due to our honoured guest, who so justly deserves the homage of ladies, and so well knows how to value it."

"Oh, what heavenly beauties these are!" cried the king, quite enraptured at the sight of so much loveliness. "I pray you advance, follow that lovely girl who offers to lead you on, and take me with you. I would give old England for a smile from those lips."

The princess courteously gave her hand to the king, and followed the train of young maidens, who, led on by Floris, danced on before them, till they arrived at a bower of roses, where seats had been provided for them.

The king was then about thirty years of age. He was of the middle height and strongly built, and his manner and demeanour were less those of a king than of a gallant cavalier. His features were finely formed, and the auspicious change in his fortune had given a lively and happy expression to his countenance. His rich black hair fell in a profusion of curls over his neck and shoulders, according to the fashion of the cavaliers, introduced by him. He was sumptuously dressed, and had the most winning courtesy and affability of manner, so that his first appearance was calculated to efface the disadvantageous impression so justly created against him by report.

Floris was in the same predicament as a child who sees a drawing of some animal it has been taught to fear. Her imagination had conjured up such a frightful picture of the king, that when he was actually before her she did not know him, and looked around in search of this object of terror, while at the same time she felt much interested by the appearance of the handsome young man beside the princess. She was pleased

at the favourable impression she had evidently made on him, and felt that his presence inspired her with confidence in approaching the princess. The excitement of the moment lent a richer glow to her lovely cheek, and the modest dignity with which she delivered her address to the princess enchanted all the spectators.

When she had finished speaking, she knelt down before the princess, and placed the wreath in her lap; but the latter bent forward, and said, with a gracious smile, "Will not you allow me to give your beautiful offering to him who, I know, would have so gladly received it from your hands?"

Floris blushed, and was at a loss what to reply; but when the king bent forward to receive the gift, and gazed on Floris with his most winning smile, she said, timidly, "I have not another."

"Well, that is an additional reason for offering him this one," returned the princess. "Will your majesty permit me to present it to you?"

Charles stretched out his hand to receive it; but Floris, unable to suppress her astonishment, coloured up to the temples, and then, turning very pale, exclaimed,

"The king!—is that the King of England?"

"Yes, my fair maiden," replied the princess. "Did not you know him?"

Floris was so confused that she was unable to reply; all her old prepossessions against the King of England flashed upon her memory—his ingratitude and injustice to the families of those who had sacrificed themselves in his service, and in particular to her beloved Urica; and she stood for a moment lost in the painful recollections this subject suggested.

Thus absorbed, she had not noticed that the royal party had risen from their seats and proceeded towards their carriages, followed by her companions; and suddenly looking round, found herself standing alone in the midst of a set of Charles II.'s courtiers, who, attracted by her beauty, had gathered round her, and were gazing on her with looks of impertinent curiosity. She immediately attempted to join her companions, but one or two cavaliers placed themselves so as to impede her progress, and, attributing her emotion on hearing the king's name to a different cause, addressed her in a tone of bantering familiarity and highflown compliment, so offensive to Floris, that she with difficulty refrained from bursting into tears. However, making an effort to command herself, she merely requested her persecutors to allow her to pass and regain her post.

"By St. George, you are very cruel to wish to run away from us so soon!" cried one. "You should not be in such a hurry to rejoin that flock of pigeons, for you eclipse them all; and though you may not find a royal admirer here, there's many a good-looking fellow amongst us who would give his existence for one of your bewitching little smiles, and a kiss from those sweet rosy lips," so saying, he advanced towards her with a confident air.

Floris looked round in despair.

"Oh!" she cried, clasping her hands, "is there no one here who will protect me from such insults?"

As she spoke, her eye fell on a young cavalier who stood at a little distance gazing intently upon her, and who now joined the group. His

appearance had the immediate effect of inspiring Floris with hope and confidence. His figure was tall, and his demeanour sober and dignified; a profusion of rich brown hair clustered around his lofty brow, and his pale, thoughtful countenance was lit up by a dark beaming eye, which bore an expression of deep feeling. Floris fixed an imploring look upon him, and her lips parted as if to speak; but a strange emotion, for which she could not account to herself, deprived her of the power of utterance. Yet the stranger understood her meaning, and the expression of interest and kindness on his countenance told Floris he would be her deliverer. In another moment he was by her side, and, grasping the arm of the cavalier who had spoken last, he said,

"Excuse me, my Lord of Laneric, but you should not teach this young lady to believe these to be English manners; we should beware of confirming the unfavourable opinion report has procured for us abroad!"

The clear, firm voice in which he pronounced these words stung the cavalier to the quick.

"It is possible, my lord," he replied, in a scornful tone, "that your manners may differ from ours; for, while we have faithfully followed our king through dangers and privations in his wanderings through foreign lands, you have preferred staying at home, and lounging over women's spinning-wheels, till the hour of his return, which has cost you no further trouble than to cross the channel and receive the king whom we have protected."

"Earl of Laneric!" returned the other, calmly, "you pronounce judgment against yourself; 'twere easy to prove to you that those alone had the right of recalling their king who stood up for his rights at home, and maintained them at the risk of their lives; but this is no fitting time for such discussions, nor do I feel any desire to have strife with those whom our exertions have enabled to return to their homes. Yet permit me to remark, that our English manners, which, perhaps, from this cause may be more present to my memory than yours, enjoin us to protect every defenceless female from insult."

Thus saying, he offered his arm to Floris, and, without listening to the muttered retort of the cavalier, led her to her companions.

The king was in the act of assisting the princess into her carriage when Floris approached.

"Ah, beautiful maiden," he said, "you tarried so long that I feared you had deserted us altogether. I envy you, my Lord Fawcett," he added, addressing the young noble, "for being so fortunate as to engage this young lady's attention."

"Fawcett!" cried Floris, letting go his arm in extreme surprise; "Fawcett!" she repeated, in accents of delight; "is it possible? Are you indeed related to the late Earl of Fawcett?"

"I am his son," said the young man, equally surprised; "and I shall attach a new value to this title if it will give me a claim on your regard."

"Then," continued Floris, who scarcely heard these last words; "then you are, you must be, Lord Henry Fawcett, my dear aunt Urica's stepson!"

"Is this young lady a relation of yours, my lord?" interrupted the king.

"I was not aware of it till this moment," replied the young noble, who

had not yet recovered from his surprise; "but I shall feel highly honoured if she will grant the Earl of Fawcett any rights of relationship."

"I have no doubt of that," replied the king with a smile. He had no time to say more, for Floris, pursuing the train of her own thoughts, exclaimed in a tone of innocent delight,

"My dear kind aunt Urica! What a happy surprise it will be for her to see you! But," she continued, turning to the young man, "did you know your noble father's widow was living here?"

"I hoped to find her here," said Lord Henry, but he stopped short, for he felt the time and place ill-suited to any indulgence of feeling; he marked the ironical smiles and whispers of the spectators, and even then felt that Floris had acquired a sacred claim to his interest.

He, therefore, silently assisted her into the princess's state carriage, where, by the desire of the latter, a place had been reserved for Floris and her cousin, Bella van Marseeven, and then mounted his horse to take his place in the king's train, as the chief dignitaries of the city had, in the mean time, invited his majesty to proceed towards the palace.

A few moments' delay occurred ere the procession set forward, while all the company took the places assigned to them. Floris was delighted to find herself beside her cousin. As she glanced timidly around, she caught sight of Lord Fawcett at a little distance from the rest, apparently wholly absorbed in gazing at her.

As the sun shone full on his face she thought him even handsomer than before, though he looked paler and more thoughtful; and she felt that the recollections she had cherished from her childhood did not deceive her, for this youth, though he lacked the ardour and brilliant manner of his father, strikingly resembled him in appearance.

Her early love for his father, and her warm affection for Urica, contributed to increase the interest with which he had inspired her. When the carriage at length drove on, and he made her a profound bow, her emotion was so great that she knew not how to thank him, except by laying her hand on her heart.

Floris had anticipated the greatest pleasure from this festival; but now all her feelings were changed. Sigh after sigh escaped her oppressed heart; the tears were ready to start into her eyes; and, in the excitement of her mind, she could not tell whether she felt supremely happy or utterly wretched. She now no longer took an interest in things for their own sakes. The novelty and variety of the scene had suddenly ceased to possess charms for her; she gazed dreamily on the gay festive throng till it seemed to change into a confused mass. All the devices resorted to for the amusement of the illustrious visitors failed to excite attention or interest in her; she seemed dead to all around—till, suddenly, the cavalcade of English gentlemen appeared in view beside the carriage. A deep blush tinged her cheek, and an exclamation of surprise burst from her lips when the purple velvet mantle of the young Earl of Fawcett was blown against the open carriage in which she sat; and, on looking up, she caught his eye fixed upon her, though he was speaking to the king. Thenceforward he rode within view, and Floris felt irresistibly impelled to watch that pale countenance, and discover whether its melancholy expression could be chased by a smile; and it was only when she saw a smile there that she glanced eagerly around to ascertain the cause.

The young earl seemed to feel himself under a similar obligation; for he, too, sought to obtain a view of Floris's countenance; and, when they caught each other in a smile, it would have been hard for them to say whether the cause existed in external objects or in themselves; yet one thing was certain—Lord Henry impatiently longed for the end of this interminable ride; and determined, as soon as he should be at liberty, to repair to his step-mother, though not long before he had been entreated to give a promise to the contrary, and had once been on the point of doing so.

A magnificent banquet was given at the town-hall on this occasion. As it was the first at which Floris had ever been present, it naturally had the effect of diverting her thoughts, especially as her beauty excited universal admiration. The king, who had been so much struck by her charms in the morning, treated her with marked courtesy, and claimed her hand for a dance. The young Prince of Anhalt followed his example, and entered into a serious interesting conversation with Floris, which pleased her far better than the gay raillery and ironical remarks of the king, who loved to question the innocence of the ladies with whom he conversed, in order to allow full scope to his unrestrained and free style of speech.

Wherever she moved the Earl of Fawcett seemed to hover around, as if to protect her in this crowd; and, as he did not dance himself, he eagerly seized every opportunity between the dances to speak to her.

Their conversation insensibly turned to a subject of painful and engrossing interest to them both; but they soon felt that it was of too affecting a nature for the present occasion, for Floris twice rose to join the dance, with tears in her beautiful eyes. Thus they strove to talk of other things; but when they dwelt on the strange circumstances of their unexpected meeting, it was with great emotion they perceived the similarity of their feelings. Lord Fawcett owned that Floris had excited his attention long before she had observed him, and that he had contemplated her with a degree of surprise and emotion inexplicable to himself, for which he could now account by her striking resemblance to his step-mother, whose remembrance he had cherished from his boyish days.

Floris innocently confessed that she, too, had felt a strange interest at first seeing him, which she could not understand till she had heard his name, and felt that his features recalled the remembrance of one who had been the idol of her childhood.

As she spoke thus, the animation of her manner rendered her inexpressibly lovely, and the emotion she betrayed in talking of his father, gave her an additional charm in Fawcett's eyes.

Ere Floris left the banquet she had made an appointment to meet him again at her aunt Urica's, for she declined receiving him at her father's house, with a species of anxiety for which she could not account even to herself.

The Legend of the Timonel.

By Duncan Craig.

I.

A Spanish Ship lies becalmed off ye Cuban Shore, at Close of Day.

Oh! pleasant is the sun when his daily course is run,
And when his burning beams have sunk beneath the wave.
But hideous is dark night, when it loometh in its might,
And ghostly forms surround, and there is none to save.
Then meteors of the gloom, like spectres from the tomb,
Upon the surging wave crests, like restless demons, dance;
Whilst sails are struggling hard, from out the groaning yard,
And moaning winds, resistless, upon the waves advance.

'Tis night upon the waters: the sun has sunk to sleep
Beneath the hissing waves of the Caribbean deep:
A goodly vessel lies becalmed, her rustling sails faint creak,
And listless hangs the golden flag, that droopeth from the peak.

A sail! a sail, swift heaves in sight, along the wooded shore,
She saileth as no mortal craft has ever sailed before;
But broken is her black hull, and torn the canvas sail,
And tott'ring are her taunt masts, as if in wintry gale.

Loud booms the thunder's roll upon each pallid soul,
And flashes now the lightning as the stranger draweth nigh;
But terror grasped each heart, as if no more 'twould part,
When a hundred demon yells o'er the darkling waters fly.

Still near the goodly merchantman the black ship scuddeth past,
No gale of moaning wind could drive her on so fast.
No sound of human voice was like that demon cry,
Which rung full o'er the waters, as she swiftly darted by.

II.

An Old Pilot cometh off to ye Spanish Ship.

Oh! golden and bright is the dazzling sun light,
When it gilds the blue wave's foaming crest;
And the sea breeze's stave rings over the wave,
As it kisseth the shore it loves best.
Then the pilot canoe, o'er the deep calm and blue,
To the Spaniard glides swift through the tide;
"Quick! the canvas unbrail! let the wind fill her sail!
And the studding sails tower o'er her side."

III.

Ye Pilot inquireth concerning ye Gloom which hangeth over ye Crew.

"What, ho! ye Spanish mariners, ye seem in no great glee,
Unlike men sailing safely o'er the Caribbean sea,
What have ye seen that frights ye thus? Come, now, dispel this gloom,
Or have ye met the phantom ship, or goblin from the tomb?"

IV.

Ye Master answereth ye Timonel.

Quick up arose the master, then, a stately man and old:
"Come! listen to me Timonel, our fright I will unfold,
For we have seen a phantom craft, and heard a demon yell.
Good saints! it palls my spirit now the very thing to tell."
But as he spoke, a shudd'ring strong convuls'd the pilot's frame:
"Ave Maria! well I know that very vessel's name!"

V.

Ye Timonel telleth his Legend.

"'Twas just about the sun-rise hour, full twenty years, nay more;
I went to guide a merchantman outside the Cuban shore,
And three long hours I stayed in her, when lo! it blew a gale,
And, then, amid the tempest roar, we saw a stranger sail.
But when the wind had left us, at even of the day,
Upon the surging ocean, a helpless log we lay.

VI.

Ye Pirate attacketh ye Merchant Ship.

Then quickly flew the pirate, 'longside our broken hull,
With many a Buccaneer her quarter-deck was full.
Like desperate men we beat them back, into the waters dark;
There many a pirate bleaching lies, a banquet for the shark.

Alas! alas! 'twas no avail, our gallant crew lay dead,
With reeking gore our upper deck was wet and crimson red,
And seven corses stark and stiff the setting sun surveyed,
The last of all our mariners, each one where he was laid;
For me, alone, the pirates spared of all that gallant crew,
Said they, 'We'll leave you company, to cheer you all night through;
Your other comrades slumber now within their wat'ry bier;
These seven will not trouble you by talking much, we fear.'

VII.

Ye Pirates Sail away Quickly.

With bitter jeer, and many a cheer, the pirates sailed afar,
And I then loos'd the topsail from out the creaking spar,
To raise those gory corses then, with all my might I tried,
But I was faint, from loss of blood, and sat me down and cried.

VIII.

But lo! at Sunset, those Seven Dead Corpses sprang up again, and tread ye Deck.

But when the sun his course had run, and sunk 'neath ocean's breast,
Those dreary sailors, one by one, sprang upward from their rest,
With moaning shriek and hideous creak they pace the quarter-deck;
Ah! little do that ghastly crew their living pilot reck,
Save one, he was the master once, he laughed right drearily.
Good saints! my spirits in me sank with fright so wearily,
My heart was ice, my blood ran cold, with anguish and with dread,
Oh, heavens! it is a fearful thing to mate thus with the dead.

Loud laughed that ghastly mariner, ah! loudly laughed he,
And at the sound, a moaning came deep rushing o'er the sea.
Pale faces then fierce glared at me behind the luard shroud;
The moon uprose and gazed right down, athwart a silver cloud,
Our swelling courses floated proud, before the moaning wind,
Save mine, there were no living hands, the veering helm to mind.

But darker grew the night, and wilder my affright,
As in the murky light of the lurid lightning glare,
I heard the gibb'ring tone of the corses' feeble moan,
And marked their eye-balls roll, with fierce and angry stare.
Then up the shrouds they run, from the top-yards one by one,
They loose the dark brown sailcloth to the rushing of the wind.
Then onward scuds she fast, like light the shores are past:
Whilst strains the bending mast 'neath the canvas unconfin'd.

IX.

He takes the Boat and makes for ye Coast.

But when the cheerful morning broke, I took the boat and oar,
And made right swiftly onward, towards the verdant Hayti shore.
Alas! that ghostly mariner, he standeth on the bow.
'Come back! come back!' I must obey, full wearily I trow.
I reach the ship, upon her deck I cry, with bitter tears,
Unto that blessed God, who humblest moaning hears.
Down sweeps the rushing wind, through Mona's passage now,
Like slender reeds, the tap'ring spars, before the storm blast bow.
Our ghastly load are hush'd in death, their vigils they'll renew,
When fearful night once more looks down upon their hideous crew.

Oh, heavens! it is a fearful thing, to sit in dire despair,
Whilst round the sea-birds gently float, as light as summer air;
To feel so lone, 'midst ocean's moan, before a corpse's stare;
To find his eye-balls fix'd on you, with gloom, and baneful glare.
And then, when night looms down on you beneath those stony eyes,
Whilst rolls the stormy blast around, to see the dead arise.

X.

At last a Ship takes him off from ye Phantom Craft, which still Saileth on, and will for ever Sail.

A sail! a sail! oh, blessed hope! she comes before the wind,
Expecting scarce in such a craft a living man to find.
They lower a boat—they pull amain, full o'er the raging tide.
I quick leap in—they gaze at me; we gain the vessel's side.
Yet still that phantom ship sails on; she never can be late
To fright the weary mariner, with sad and ghastly freight,
When sinks the sun, his blazing beams beneath the waters deep:
When silent is the tropic wave, and hush'd the wind in sleep!"

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XII.

IN a retired cabinet of the *Palais de la Cour* sat the Duchess Regent, with her two favourite advisers—the wise and prudent president, Viglius de Aytta, and the Count of Barlaimont. Years had not diminished the forbidding traits of her aspect. The rude hand of time had deepened into furrows the harsh lines of her countenance. Her brow was thoughtful, and her eye was stern. There was about her an air of decision more in harmony with her superior talents than with her sex. Her costume, too, betrayed none of that minute attention to trifles which forms one of the graces of woman, be her station what it may. Not but she knew, when occasion required it, how to don the jewelled robe; but a disregard to the mere trivial circumstances of outward show, when not subservient to her higher aims—an austere simplicity was most consonant with her own genius. A plain black dress, and a black mantilla flung over her head and shoulders, completed her attire; and no ornament but a rosary of beads, of alternate ebony and ivory, terminated by the image of our Saviour on the cross, was visible on any part of her person. Papers and letters, amongst which a missal lay half concealed, covered the table before her, each and all bearing traces of having been perused. The room was otherwise bare; for the eye that either turned towards heaven, or sought to penetrate and guide the passions of the multitude, had neither leisure nor care to rest on minor objects.

The president of the privy council was a man declining in years and in strength, the expression of whose features, sharpened by age, would have betrayed to a physiognomist a timid, vacillating disposition; whilst in his younger companion an air of frank boldness, not unmixed with arrogance, bespoke one whose step would be firm let him tread what path he pleased. The princess was very pale; but no other trace of emotion was visible as she explained to her councillors her reasons for having called them to this secret conference.

"These things," continued she, "must not be hastily laid before the council. Few of its members, alas! are to be trusted. We must have time to consider and reconsider the imminence of the danger, and the best means to parry it. We must, in short, be completely armed at all points before we appear before those who are, at best, but doubtful friends, if they be not actual enemies. What think you of this, Barlaimont?"

"I can but repeat, your grace, what I have already said. The whole of this affair is got up to intimidate government. There is nothing in it—nothing, that is, of sufficient moment to disturb your highness."

"Nay, but I tell you," urged the princess, somewhat impatiently, "it is a real, fast-spreading conspiracy, headed by men of talent, boasting names that are calculated to mislead the multitude. I tell you my sources of intelligence are not to be doubted—they are various, yet all agree in the main tenor. Nay, many Knights of the Golden Fleece are said to be amongst them."

"Believe it not, gracious lady," exclaimed Barlaimont, indignantly. "Treason cannot abide amongst us. I will venture to say thus much for the honourable order of which I am a poor member. Pray, gracious lady, do not suffer so groundless an insinuation to dwell upon your mind."

The princess shook her head incredulously.

"Can your grace fully, implicitly rely upon the sources of such information?" asked the cautious Viglius. "It seems to me improbable, to say the least."

"I tell you," repeated the princess, "there can be no doubt. A wide-extended conspiracy is formed. Here, gentlemen, is the letter, by which Enderlecht, the *maitre d'hotel* of the trusty Count of Meghen, informs me how the traitors sought to inveigle him among them. See, here are the names he has transcribed. First on the list stands John of Marnix, lord of Thoulouse, a man of much daring and enterprise, together with some military skill; he lives at Breda, too, under the shadow of the Prince of Orange's wing. Here are, also, many abbots, whose names it would too much grieve me to repeat. Hamez, too—Hamez, *toison d'or*—the herald of your order, Barlaimont, is said to be among the foremost. But what seems more threatening still, Lefdal, Baron, and Ghisbert, three gentlemen of the Count of Egmont's household, Louis of Nassau, young Mansfelt——"

"The father of this last-named gentleman," interrupted Viglius, "knows nothing of such matters, even if his son have suffered his headlong youth to hurry him into the snare. The Count of Mansfelt is loyal."

"And the Prince of Orange too prudent," said Barlaimont; "the Count of Egmont too noble, to know aught of this. Hair-brained youths, like Louis of Nassau and young Mansfelt, may, indeed, be misled for a day; but even that I do not believe."

"Nay, but listen," continued the princess. "Brederode has put himself at their head."

"A licentious, unprincipled man!" said Barlaimont, disdainfully.

"His name, however," observed Viglius, "is not without a charm for the people. Of this, your highness, we had some notion before."

"Yes; but what I have to unfold is worse than confirmation," said the princess. "You have not yet heard all my budget of news. To the names of Brederode and Cuylenbourg is added a long list of those whose rank, talents, and credit on the public mind make them formidable. Here are dozens of letters I have received in the course of a few days, all tending to the same point. Some of these are of a friendly, warning nature; others, mysterious and threatening. Many are by unknown hands. Most accuse the Princes of Orange and of Gavres, and the Grand Admiral de Horn, of befriending and even making part of this association."

"I never can believe it," said Barlaimont, with energy.

"Time will show," answered Margaret. "Do not forget that the Prince of Orange was a Protestant in his childhood, that he renounced his faith because it was the will of my gracious father, the late emperor, that he should do so; but his marriage with a Protestant princess, his admitting of a Protestant chapel and chaplain within his household, his having chosen princes of that faith to be sponsors to his Catholic son, are so many reasons for doubting his truth to the Mother Church. And

if that be doubted, if he be not faithful to his God, how shall he be faithful to his king?"

"Nay, but your highness forgets," said Viglius, when Margaret paused, "that he had desired to become the husband of the Princess of Lorraine—an alliance which, if permitted, would have bound him doubly to the church and the sovereign."

"He desired, too, the place I unworthily fill," replied the princess, haughtily. "Perhaps, had the king furthered his ambition in all things, he might have bought him over to become a faithful ally."

"Better a faithful ally than a troublesome subject or a powerful enemy," said Viglius. "It might have been better to soothe than to irritate. But the evil is done, and the Prince of Orange cannot be trusted."

"No!" exclaimed the princess, vehemently; "nor do we trust him! The Count of Egmont, too, is but a hollow friend to the holy cause of religion. The brothers of his wife have renounced the true faith; and he did not scruple, at one time, to insult the king in his chosen minister, the purple of Rome in one of her representatives; to force from my side the wise Granvella—wise, for he knew them well. No, no; I trust them not, Orange and Egmont; nor will I ever!"

"Whatever their secret feelings may be," observed Viglius, "they are not likely to have compromised themselves recklessly, as Brederode appears to have done."

"There," said the princess, pushing a heap of papers towards them. "Look, gentlemen; read—examine."

Whilst Barlaimont and Viglius busied themselves with a hasty perusal of some of the documents, Margaret rapidly ran her eye through others, evidently studied before, from which she seemed anxious to glean fresh information. Having looked over a few, she turned to Viglius.

"Well, president, what do you say to these things?"

"My opinion is," said the old man, slowly, and meditatively, "that half these informations are furnished by the confederates themselves, and are false; that they have dared to make use of noble names to impose upon the people, whose owners will take care, very shortly, to clear themselves of the imputations so artfully cast upon them. What is more alarming, is their endeavouring to gain over the towns and the merchants."

"In Antwerp, more especially," said the princess, "I understand they have many friends, and some, too, of a dangerous spirit. We have no men, no money, to support us in a struggle, if such be called for; and the king, my brother, does not wholly trust me. He does not act immediately upon my representations and according to my necessities, but consults, and hesitates, until it is too late to strike the blow which might, if promptly dealt, have nipped many an evil in the bud. I am not able, not free to act as I would; and yet I bear all the responsibility of a free agent. I cannot conciliate by granting; I cannot check by timely severity; and yet the king expects me to keep the Netherlands as quiet as if he himself were present. The people, in the mean time, look up to me for protection, and every party expects to derive advantage from an interference, the force of which they seek to limit by all the means in their power. Never was a situation more difficult, more trying. Oh, my poor aunt, little did you foresee the dilemma in which I now find myself!"

"Perhaps your highness sees the storm gathering when the clouds are but drifting before the wind," said Viglius.

"You cannot yet judge," said Margaret. "You know not all. Brederode is too bold not to be powerful. He has sought, and, it is confidently asserted, has found the means of establishing an alliance with the Protestant princes of France and Germany. The heretics cling to each other from land to land, with a tenacity which they feel necessary to a bad cause. The Dukes of Cleves and Saxony, and Prince Schwartzenberg, are said to be favourable to them. Coligni is their friend, together with many others whom it would be too long to enumerate. Brederode no longer shuns the light of day, but comes openly forth, I verily believe, to wage war upon us. At the head of several hundred men, all of whom belong to the aristocracy of these lands, he dares to demand an interview with me to present a so-styled *humble* petition, in which his humility goes so far as to state that his loyalty to his sovereign will not permit him and others to obey the will of that sovereign—that, out of the purity of their devotion to the crown, they will resist its mandates to the last extremity. The edicts of the late emperor they plead against as being too severe, and destructive to the prosperity of the cities; they wish them to be softened, or rather that the heresy to which they incline may flourish in peace and liberty. They say they will never permit the inquisition to be established, and much more to the same purpose. They come, in short, to present a *humble petition* on the state of the country; or perhaps four hundred men in arms will try to compel a defenceless woman to turn false like themselves to every duty—like them, to renounce conscience and honour! There, gentlemen," concluded the princess, with increasing agitation, that seemed to partake more of the angry mood of her father than of female timidity, "read this paper, and say what it were best to do."

"I see," observed Barlaimont, "these men call themselves the deputies of the nation; but methinks the states did not need their interference. Each town, each province, has its legal representatives in the council."

"But, surely," said Margaret, "you would not in prudence advise the doors of Brussels to be opened to them."

"Draw bolts, up with the drawbridge, and down with portcullis against them, say I," exclaimed Barlaimont. "Audacious rebels!"

But Margaret turned to her graver adviser, who seemed for a moment lost in thought.

"I advise not this, your grace," said he. "To deny them absolutely would both show our weakness and exasperate their feelings. To receive so large a force, as it appears they muster, within the walls of Brussels, were, perhaps, risking too much. It might comport better with your grace's dignity, and the necessitous state of affairs, to yield so far as to receive a certain number of this self-styled deputation; the closing of the doors against them entirely might be the signal for an instantaneous rising, which your highness has not at present the means of suppressing."

Margaret sighed deeply.

"It is almost in vain to hope that I ever shall have these means. If I were prepared with money and men for resistance, or if I had the power to yield what my conscience might allow me to grant, I should

not know the apprehensions which I confess in my present helpless state assail me."

"Surely," exclaimed Barlaimont, warmly, "among so many of high descent within this country, few will care to stain their escutcheons with the foul crime of treason. If they but see that your highness remains true to yourself, they will remain true even unto death. But I believe not the danger to be half so imminent as you imagine. I believe that a licentious, beggarly portion of the nobility, who have, by their own follies and vices, brought themselves to a state of hopeless, irrevocable ruin, have been glad to vent their private discontent through a political channel, in the hope of retrieving themselves by means as vile as their own characters—have actually sold themselves and their support to the factious Protestant merchants. Such men are to be despised—are objects of contempt and disgust. To fear them could alone confer upon the party and its object any degree of consideration; and I contend that to admit them would be lowering too much your highness's dignity. What need is there of four hundred men, armed to the teeth, as doubtless they will be, to present a petition? This savours more of threat than of humility. Suffer them not to dare so much."

"Nay," said Viglius, "this is taking a rash view of the case. There can be no doubt that all who wish well to this country, whether Catholic or Protestant, find the edicts prejudicial to the welfare of the land, and that the feelings of most men, even in Brussels, will, in some degree, lean towards the pretensions of this Brederode and his party. This is the undeniable strength which they really possess, the enlisting so much of public feeling in their favour. I say, what I am sure all the knights will to-morrow repeat—receive them, but receive them with precaution."

"I should rather have been inclined to repulse them altogether," said the princess; "but, at present, I am not prepared to compete with numbers. Of what I feel certain is, that no effort of theirs can ever compel the king, my brother, or myself, to suffer heresy to triumph. I know what you would say, president, but I have neither the power nor the will to be as lenient towards the errors of this blinded people as you may think it politically advisable. Moreover, I, like my royal brother, think the physician more kind who heals with the knife, than him who suffers the patient to perish in order that he may avoid inflicting the wound. Enough of this, gentlemen, for the present; I wish to call your attention to another circumstance. An untoward accident has given me most serious alarm. When I last hunted at Grœtenhoot, I lost a packet of importance, for it came from Spain—of the utmost importance, at the present crisis, when many wish for nothing so much as a pretence, an excuse to justify, if possible, the designs on which their hearts are bent. This document might prove invaluable to them. It contains private instructions, addressed by the king to me, in his own hand, of a nature that astonished me, and which would allow of much misuse."

The regent paused, but, seeing that neither of her auditors were willing to speak, she resumed—

"I do not see any reason for continuing to make a secret to my friends of that which, perhaps, at this very moment is no longer such to my enemies. The king, whose wisdom and talents are too well known for me to dwell upon them, seems to have exerted both in no ordinary

degree. Incredible as it may appear—and perhaps the very fact contains the bitterest reproof to me—his majesty is better informed of what passes in Flanders than I am myself, and had taken the trouble to write out for me a list, containing the name of almost every heretic of any note even amongst the merchants and rich citizens of the towns. Not only were their exact situations and opinions described, but even their family history and plans. As many great names were noted down as obscure ones—at least, comparatively obscure, although it would appear the latter, in their own stations, are not without importance, no hint was omitted that might assist to guide me in my difficulties."

"And did these instructions go so far as to prescribe to your highness any decided proceedings against the parties?" demanded Viglius.

The princess looked embarrassed. Even to her most confidential councillors she liked not to develop the whole truth. It was not more a part of her nature, or training, to repose in any one her entire confidence, than it was that of her brother, or had been that of her father. Circumstances, however, governed her, in this instance, as in many others; she felt that frankness might be useful when silence was but too probably puerile. After a moment's hesitation, therefore, she proceeded—

"Alas! I am afraid the king indicated but too plainly not only how he thought it advisable for me to act, but also what he himself hoped one day to effect. Doubtless, should the parties implicated ever obtain sight of these papers, they will consider themselves fully justified in following out their mischievous designs; they will, perhaps, even allege self-defence as an excuse for rebellion. But how to recover them! I have in vain sought them myself, and caused them to be searched for by trusty people. They have, perhaps, fallen into the hands of those who may not think it consistent with their safety to deliver them up. I dare scarcely think to what account they may be inclined to turn them."

"It seems most likely," said Barlaimont, "that some one of your grace's train has found this packet, in which case its return can scarcely be doubted."

"I think otherwise," replied the princess. "Sufficient time has elapsed to have allowed of such result if it could have been expected. I have, besides, thrown out hints on this subject, guarded, it is true, but such as must have been perfectly intelligible to one who was willing, or able to understand me; but all to no purpose; none seemed to be in the slightest degree aware of the circumstance to which I alluded. I watched, narrowly, every turn of each countenance, every glance of each eye; and it is my firm conviction that none of those who accompanied me to the chase that day were even conscious of my loss. In that quarter, I fear, no hope of recovery can remain."

"Perchance some boor may have stumbled upon it," observed Barlaimont, "little dreaming of its value or its owner; or it may be kept back by some one until claimed. Perhaps the promise of a large recompense would be immediately followed by its restitution."

"Nay," said Viglius, "that would be impolitic, inasmuch as it would unavoidably give the alarm to the factions, who would certainly possess themselves of it either by stratagem or by violence. In either case our apprehensions would be justified."

"You are right," replied Barlaimont, frankly; "I see at a glance the

inconvenience attending on my suggestion; if they once get possession of this letter, they will print it, and hawk it about through every town and village of the Netherlands."

"It is fearful to think what the consequences may be," said the regent, "if, as it seems but too probable, these papers find their way into disloyal hands. It is the doubt, the uncertainty of how much, or how little those whom I must face, and, if possible, guide, in the council to-morrow, know of this affair, that makes me so undecided, and, if the word were seemly in the daughter of Charles V., I might well-nigh say, so timid."

"Certainly, the present situation of affairs is most critical," said Viglius; "and perhaps, in consideration of the commercial interests of the nation, something might be yielded."

"Never will the king stoop to concessions," said Margaret. "No one can forget his memorable words, 'Rather not reign than own heretics for subjects.'"

"Alas! madam, if the king give you not better means, how is resistance possible? To yield slowly, gradually——"

"And temporarily you would say, I presume," exclaimed Margaret, warming at the suggestion; "to seem to bend until we gather sufficient strength to rise again, and explain the true meaning of words which prudence and necessity will compel us to couch in a doubtful form. Yes, you are right. If we can but gain time, all may yet be well. By this means we may, at least, delay the struggle until better prepared to meet it, or until succour, coming from Spain, we may—what would be a far greater blessing to this country—crush the malcontents altogether. But, alas!" continued the princess, her voice sinking from its tone of energy to one of comparative despondency; "but, alas! are not these vain dreams, with which I am soothing my alarmed spirits? Four hundred armed men will shortly be before the gates of Brussels, and the packet—the all-important papers—the most formidable of all weapons—perhaps, at this very moment, in their hands. These are not circumstances that can give hope or courage!"

"But surely there is nought in them to inspire fear!" exclaimed Barlaimont—"a set of needy adventurers, with, perchance, a good name here and there sprinkled amongst them! Their being admitted to the presence of your highness will be sufficient to quell them; but it is an honour they have little deserved, and which, in my opinion, should scarcely be awarded them. A handful of doubloons would set such spirits at rest for ever! I cannot, will not believe that a generous soul has enlisted amongst them. Yes, such is my view of the subject, although the president appears so incredulous and grave upon the matter. As to the papers, that is, I will admit, an awkward affair."

"But," said Viglius, "may it not be asserted that they are malicious fabrications, spread about with evil intentions?"

"Excellent!" said the princess, with a pleased smile. "That will do exceedingly well!"

"And it is not yet proved that they have been found, or by whom," added Barlaimont. "The difficulties seem to lessen as we examine them closer; and, were they to increase tenfold, your highness need not quail before them. Nay, I would court them as harbingers of success, for they

would rouse the noble spirit of your lineage in your heart, gracious lady, and you would rise equal to the danger, be it what it might. It were but the greater triumph for one in so helpless a condition as that in which your grace now stands, to effect what other less-gifted princes would require armies to accomplish."

The councillor had touched the right chord. Margaret's eye flashed with pride, and the spirit of her house tinged her sallow cheek with a warmer glow.

"Yes!" she exclaimed, with a smile, "it were indeed a triumph worthy of my father's daughter, if, alone, unassisted, surrounded by traitors, having to oppose a discontented, mutinous multitude, and environed by a thousand difficulties, I could overcome them all, and, like a rock amid the foaming waves, stand unshaken by the tempest. It were much for a woman to accomplish, but the task will assume a yet nobler character when it is remembered for what object it is undertaken and achieved. In the cause of God the weak are strong," continued Margaret, crossing herself devoutly as she rose, a sign that she wished the conference ended. "Well, gentlemen, the council to-morrow will be stormy, but it will serve, at least, to show the true colours of many; and, supported by your energy, Barlaimont, and by the wisdom of your years, president, I doubt not but I will go through it very well. I shall not forget to make a *neuvaine* for those unlucky papers; and, as you say, Viglius, we can, at the worst, find some means of evasion. All means are justifiable when the aim to be attained is a good one."

As the princess concluded, the nobles retired from the cabinet.

"That is one of the favourite maxims of the princess's early teacher, Ignace of Loyola," said Barlaimont, as he descended the broad stairs of the palace, "to which I have often thought she clings but too faithfully."

"He has not the merit of having invented it," replied his aged companion, with a sigh; "if, indeed, it be one. Man must have learnt that secret of evil when he first fell; but I am afraid it is now too late in the day to unteach it to the world."

The associates, having gained the court, ceremoniously took leave of each other, and slowly went their way through opposite gates.

Chapter XIII.

The recent separation of the brothers Van Meeren had completely changed, in the course of a very few days, the habits and pursuits of both, as well as the current of their feelings. This lay in the motives that had determined the final step, rather than in the bare fact itself. Paul's affections had hitherto curbed his energy. Thus suddenly freed from the chain that for years had bound him, he at once passed from a comparatively passive into an active existence, which brought the whole power of his mind into play; for not only had the management of their great manufactory solely devolved upon him—Cornelius having pertinaciously adhered to his resolution of giving up affairs altogether—but no sooner did he openly and boldly profess his real sentiments, than he found himself, as might have been expected from the weight given him by his talents and fortune, the centre and hope of a faction. Thus he was

speedily involved in the manifold cares and far-spreading interests of a chief of a party; whilst Cornelius, almost as suddenly renouncing all that had constituted the business and pleasure of his hitherto useful and cheerful existence, slunk to his chimney nook like a frightened rabbit into its burrow.

Cornelius was now rarely if ever to be met with in his former haunts. Paul, on the contrary, was visible at all hours and places, and nowhere more surely than on the Exchange, where he for the most part spent his morning hours.

The Exchange of Antwerp was at that time one of the chief rendezvous of the city. Bruges boasted the first and Antwerp the second building of this nature erected in Europe; and Elizabeth of England, keenly alive to the interests of her nation, and ever on the watch to procure for it every advantage possessed by other lands, caused a similar structure to be raised in London, the third devoted to those purposes, which the rapid increase of commerce began to demand. It consisted of a low, square building, flanked at the corners by bell-roofed towers. In the interior, four wide, open galleries enclosed a spacious court, in the midst of which bubbled a clear fountain. Thus, when the weather was fair, the merchants of all nations who met there, either in the way of business or pleasure, could enjoy the free air and the sight of the heavens above; but when, as is more often the case in our northern climates, the former was damp, and the latter overcast, they found a convenient shelter under the galleries.

There, if they pleased, they might interweave the golden thread of art with the duller web of commercial speculation; for their eyes and minds were constantly refreshed by the best works of foreign as well as native artists which were there exhibited for sale. It was not ill calculated thus to foster taste in the rich. Our ancestors, indeed, sought as much as in them lay to poetise their life by mixing up with its most serious avocations the blandishments of art and luxury.

The hour was at hand which usually cleared the Exchange of all its busy groups. Here and there, indeed, an idler or an artist still lingered before a favourite picture; but even they, one by one, disappeared, and the life within gradually gave way to the profound repose of mid-day.

Two solitary figures, however, remained, occasionally halting, and again renewing their monotonous walk round the fountain, whose clear bubbling waters accompanied, but did not drown, the murmur of their voices. These two men were Paul van Meeren and William Kay. The countenance of the former had lost all traces of the gloom that had but a few days before somewhat dulled its expression. It seemed now full of determination and life. His sallow cheek, and deep-set grey eye, lighted up with renewed fire, formed a strong contrast to the fair, mild, and melancholy visage of his friend.

"Yes," said Paul, in reply to some previous remark of his companion, "the smallest stone flung into that fountain might impede the play of its waters; thus his weakest ties still interfere with a man's truest impulses. Only he who stands alone from choice or chance can be called free."

"You are free now, and ought to be satisfied. And yet, Paul, you did not leave what you had long considered your home without pain."

"At the moment, perhaps; but now that the parting is over I am glad. My only regret is, that so much bitterness has been mixed up in the cup of our separation. Anxiety for the fate of my deluded brother

and innocent niece must still, at times, claim a portion of my thoughts, which I would willingly devote but to one object."

"Why will you anticipate nothing but evil for them? Methinks the wise obscurity in which they enwrap themselves may prove their best shield."

"No, Kay—no! You fall there into a very general and dangerous error. A safe neutrality amongst contending factions is impossible; and, in times like these, for the timorous and the weak—those who will not or cannot resist—there is but one way of escaping persecution, and that is a *timely flight*. You seem to doubt my words, my friend, but, alas! time will show them but too true. If prudence dictates the necessity of flying a country which is disturbed, be the cause of that disturbance war, or intestine trouble, it is doubly necessary in my poor brother's case; for his obstinacy and credulity has caused him to cherish for years, within his bosom, a snake that will sting him to death!"

I, too, have long mistrusted Chievosa," said Kay; "but I understand his interests are so bound up with your brother's family, that they may have much to hope, and nothing to fear from him. Many rumours are afloat on that subject. Your niece's name and his are in every mouth."

"They are false!" said Paul, impatiently; "utterly false! Margaret, at least, trusts me, although her parents make so light of my counsel. I was cruelly deceived in them—that was a disappointment which I little expected—but in her I am certain of never being deceived."

"It is my turn to fear, Paul, that you fall into a common error," said Kay, with a smile. "You place too much reliance on the young. You think that they cannot err because they hitherto have lacked temptation, time, or opportunity. You must prepare yourself to encounter much disappointment, in the autumn of your life, that you have not known throughout the long years that lay behind you. On all sides, my poor friend, will you meet with such. I speak not only of your private affections; but in the new course on which you have entered, you know not how many, and how great, will be the defeats of your brightest hopes—how numberless the difficulties you will have to encounter."

"Do you think I am not aware of this, and that I enlist myself in the cause of an oppressed religion and country with any view of self-aggrandisement? The *first* who raise the banner of resistance must expect to fall the victims of their temerity. But, like those in a storming party, who first rush to the attack, and fall that others may rise upon their bodies, they perish for the good of their brethren; and their only meed must be the success of those for whom they have broken a path."

"With this desponding view of your own fate, without even one faint hope of personal success, how can you embrace so boldly what seems so poor a chance?"

"I devote myself to my religion and country with the same sort of feeling with which the Roman dashed himself into the gulf, that it might close over his mangled remains. The first Christian martyrs who cheerfully embraced certain destruction that a glorious end might be achieved, and after-generations be blessed, must each and all have felt as I feel. Nor do I regret that the allusions of youth do not shed their graceful, delusive tints over my mind. A far brighter and less deceptive glow irradiates it. If I regret youth in any way, it is that I might have better energies to bring to the cause, and a greater sacrifice to make;

for what sacrifice is this, to devote a life nearly spent, the few drops yet lingering in the almost burned-down lamp?"

"The last drops that remain are the most precious," said Kay, pressing the hand of his friend with a sudden impulse of sympathy. "You, of all men, need not lament that you bring not the folly of youth to the task you have embraced; its strength, its energy has never deserted you. I honour and admire your self-devotion. But tell me what can induce you to remain in some measure within your former trammels? Why not break off from all commercial interests? Commerce has of late become rather a source of loss than of gain, and it can but withdraw your thoughts from greater, though more dangerous objects."

"There are many reasons, Kay, for that part of my conduct. You cannot be aware in your sphere of action, which is so completely limited to yourself, although its results are so general, how cruel a blow to hundreds of innocent, helpless beings, is the closing of a fabric. It is, at once, withdrawing life itself—that is, all the means of supporting it—and reducing to utter destitution, not only men whom despair may drive to acts that would spread their own misery into a wider circle, but also the women and children who depend upon them. Fear has driven from Antwerp most of the rich and feeble-minded merchants, and thousands of poor destitute victims are wandering about the streets without occupation or food. It now becomes doubly a duty for every man to stand firm at his post. For this reason I keep employed all those who are willing to remain by a Protestant master, affording, at the same time, a refuge to the persecuted poor of my own creed, without drawing down upon me attention or malevolence. In this manner, whilst their earthly necessities are relieved, the weal of their souls is not endangered; for most wretched is the man who, by cruel necessity, is compelled to feign a religion he cannot feel,—he must lose all sentiment of honour and truth, and such a one I would no longer trust."

"But," said Kay, "you make proselytes among the people you employ? Confess."

"I *hate* that word," said Paul, "but I will candidly avow that some of the men have adopted my faith, more moved, as I think, by the power of example, than by that of persuasion, which I have scorned to use towards them. I think such a measure would have been, in our respective positions, ungenerous to say the least. No," he added, with a melancholy smile, "I never tried to convince but two individuals very dear to me, and with them I failed."

"You mean Margaret and myself, Paul. We might both have yielded had we not had as eloquent advisers to counterbalance your power. She in Father Eustace, whose gentle virtues would alone teach one to believe and love the tenets that made him what he is; and I, in the spirit of poetry, through which I breathe. Did I cease to believe in the most poetical of creeds, methinks all would be dead within me—my bright fancies would turn dull—my warm imaginings cold, and my very existence become for ever discoloured. You demand more of me than my reason can yield,—the sunniness of my life."

"Nay, Kay, though I think a sterner faith, far from extinguishing the vividness of fancy, may even give it a loftier flight, I do not feel within me the vocation of an apostle; nor do I wish to persuade you into

martyrdom; so let us suffer the matter to rest there. We, at least, know by experience—what the designing would persuade the world to be either criminal or impossible—that we may esteem and love one another though professing different forms of worship; and that is the main point. Father Eustace, though a priest, understands *that*, too. But tolerance is too mild a virtue to bloom easily in the volcanic soil of man's heart, when it is not of a purified and exalted nature. The rude, boisterous passions that constantly prompt it to anger rather than to charity—to strife rather than to peace—too often make him choke the heaven-born plant with the weeds of his own rash pride. None can be tolerant but the truly good and the enlightened; but how few—how very few are really so in this world."

"Let us hope," said Kay, "that the time will come when men, warned by the sad examples we are likely to give them, will be content to adore God each after his own fashion, desiring no other bond of union than that of universal love."

"Then will man change his very nature, which is one of oppression. Peace belongs to a better world than this, which preserves its choicest blessing for itself, that we may not cling too much earthward."

"But may not your religion be crushed in its bud?" said Kay; "and after-centuries hear of it but as a traditional heresy that was easily quelled by firm and wise princes? Success, you know, qualifies all things."

"No, no!" said Paul, with energy; "it will not be thus. We have powerful enemies, it is true; but it is the very nature of our faith to be strong in endurance."

"Say, rather," said Kay, "that oppression invariably makes the weak desperate, and that martyrdom has, for stern minds, a secret charm."

"Perhaps you may be right," replied Paul; "then let us say that martyrdom, like that which helped to establish the Christian faith in days of yore, will cause ours to burn with a purer, steadier light."

"There seems but little prospect of your eventual triumph at present," said Kay, thoughtfully. "The lesser nobility have, indeed, been bribed or threatened into taking part with the oppressed, and in their turn may, perhaps, alternately threaten and entreat; but the higher and more powerful nobles seem to watch with neutral indifference the whole of these proceedings."

"Think not so," said Paul. "The king has offended every class equally, and every class will resent in turn. Mistake not the present lull for a real calm. It is but the pause before the storm."

"Maybe. But, Paul, you cannot deny that nothing has yet been done. And there can be no doubt but the Duchess of Parma will force the confederates to content themselves with an evasive answer."

"Possibly; but there are great and wise men in this country who will, in the right time, stand up to protect and guide us. Besides, we are daily gaining strength from its surest source, *union*. The weakest, when in numbers, are strong. It is difficult, from the many, to select particular objects of hatred and punishment; thus there is security as well as strength in numbers. Here in Antwerp, for instance," continued Paul, lowering his voice almost to a whisper as he leant close to his friend, "we have already formed consistories of our creed, among whose members we reckon some of the richest, most influential men of the city; and what is of far

greater moment, men of pure, disinterested zeal. We have elected a set of magistrates of our own—have statutes of our own approving. We are, in short, making every preparation for the eventual struggle that must soon take place."

"I do not understand," said Kay, pensively, "the enthusiasm that gives you energy; for I foresee nought but public disasters and private catastrophes."

"The future will repay this poor country for all it has already suffered, or may have yet to go through."

"Ay," said Kay; "but what once has sunk may never rise again!"

"That were indeed a melancholy consideration," answered Paul; "but one which, I confess, my mind cannot embrace."

Here they were interrupted by the appearance of a third personage, who was evidently making towards them. Paul would willingly have avoided him; but the Exchange was otherwise totally deserted, and any attempt at evasion, unperceived, became impossible. He and Kay, therefore, advanced to meet our old acquaintance Van Diest, whom age had so lightly touched that his step was as jaunty as ever.

"Well met, my masters," he said; "sad times—sad times—usual greeting now-a-days—bad news everywhere—no good to be fished up in any quarter from the Town Hall to the poorest fishwoman's hut—always the old tune—lamentations everywhere."

"Faith! you do not seem the worse for this general evil. Your health and spirits have never, I verily believe, failed you for the space of an hour the last thirty years I have had the pleasure of knowing you."

"Very true, Master Kay; thank God, my poor body thrives apace, despite all the contrarieties of my spirit; but then, good sirs, I ever kept myself free from all personal harm, took no wife in my youth, thought it might prove a trouble in after-life—you see I was right. In times like these, women are sure to get others or themselves into trouble. I have no chick or chicken to care for—not even a fair niece, Master Paul. I bless my stars for *that*, too. My brother Ghysbrecht has been as wise as myself on the chapter of matrimony. I have thus just enough of general sympathy to keep my heart alive, and have escaped all private anxieties."

"It is not like your usual wisdom, however, to show yourself so much abroad, my good friend," said Paul; "to seek converse with all sorts of people, Catholics and Protestants, and to visit everywhere as you do. Where's your vaunted caution? I, for one, you know, am a rank heretic."

"Oh! but," said Van Diest, with a sly smile, putting his forefinger to his nose; "I take care when and where I am seen with certain persons. I take, personally, a share in nothing; I have no opinions of any sort; and surely there can be no harm in seeing and hearing what passes around one."

"The most inoffensive often fall a sacrifice to their own imprudence and the misconstructions of suspicion," said Kay.

"Especially when they meddle with their neighbours' affairs, as you are somewhat too apt to do, Master van Diest," added Paul, with a slight sneer.

"Ah me!" sighed Van Diest, "I cannot withdraw to my chimney nook like a snail within its house, or like your worthy brother within his

back room. What could I do from morning till night? Who would come and tell me how the world wagged without? But, heigh-ho! my masters, how sorely is the world changed since we were first friends! Who would know this poor city of ours now? Then it was when one met of a fine day—as might be this one—'How do, my gentle sirs; heard the last news? Splendid cargo of spices come in for the Fuggers—a sight to gladden a man's heart!'—'What a shipful of white linen was sent this morning to England! enough to clothe the whole isle in one sheet of snow.'—'Did you see the beautiful hangings ordered for Queen Elizabeth? or were you at the banquet given by the Consul of England to the authorities of the town? Many fair golden florins went to the purchase of the Venetian glasses, without speaking of the rich hangings.' Yes, every day had its wonder: now it was a newly finished picture of Master Kay's, or Master Alost's—then a masterpiece of the cunning brothers, Van Meeren. Yes, every day had its pomps, its pleasures, its business, its christenings and weddings, its festivities. Oh! how many a gay *fête* do I remember! How easily the money was won; how pleasantly it was spent! And then there were the gay bouts at the 'Twelve Pleasant Devices'—none happier there than your good brother, Master Paul, except he had some singing and fiddling at his house; but at home or abroad all was gaiety. Do you remember the *fêtes* of our guilds, when they marched through the city with streamers flying, fife and tabor playing, the pretty maidens thronging the streets, and making them gay with their bright blue eyes and scarlet petticoats, like flowers in a corn-field in the season? Then was the time when a man who had eyes and ears might have found plenty wherewith to cheer him. But of late years—Alack! alack! When people are grouped together at the corner of a street, it is to watch some poor father dragged from his home on plea of heresy, his whimpering wife and children filling the streets with their clamorous grief. If the drums are heard to beat, the streamers seen to wave, it is for some bloody execution about to take place. Half the girls are now clad in mourning, and seem like sisters of the Penitentiary order, and their eyes are swollen with weeping. Most of the houses are closed, deserted by their rightful owners, whilst none come to fill their places. The wharfs are no longer encumbered with foreign and native ships, and the weightiest freights they carry hence are stores of citizens with their families, eager to transport to other lands their wealth and their industry. Farewells, and leave-takings, either of this land, or of this world—murmurs and complaints—threats and weepings, are the only sounds that meet the ear. Lucky, indeed, when the crackling of fagots, by which a Christian soul is lighted out of this world, or the creeking of a tree, does not warn one that the fate of a friend is being decided."

"A gloomy, but a true picture," said Paul, thoughtfully.

Van Diest, ravished with having possessed himself of the attention of his auditors, continued to pour forth the strain that had proved so successful.

"Now one no longer hears of such or such a happy event in a respected family, as a daughter being born to the Van Meerens; or a fine alliance taking place among our patrician families, such as an Ursel being about to wed a Berchem; but, instead, that honest Master Cornelius Grappheus, the underwriter, one of the cleverest men about town, is undergoing a

painful trial for some foolish rhymes; and that Master Alost is in prison on account of some harmless jest having escaped his masterly pencil. Our friends among the foreigners have disappeared one by one: old Rondinelli, the Florentine—the Sturgeons—the Fuggers—the Welzers—all are gone, flown away in time. Lucky is it for young Ortelius, that under various pretences he keeps away, though it be not an advantage either to his native town or his friends. One cannot drink with a neighbour, and speak, in the thoughtlessness of the moment, one doubtful word, one passing thought, but the neighbour shall prove a traitor, the senseless jest a crime, and the next best servant of the king a judge. One hears such strange stories and news, one never could believe but that the world is turning round. One day one is told that the worshipful Masters van Meeren, who have lived in love and peace together ever since they left the mother's breast, have parted in anger, because Master Paul is grown a heretic, and Master Cornelius a bigot—two of the best, most reasonable men alive. What next, you'll say, my masters?" continued Van Diest, elated with the smile his words had raised on the lips of his listeners. "Wonders will never cease. The next thing, then, is that my pretty Mistress Margaret, the pride of our town, the fairest, the richest, the wisest little damsel the Scheldt ever saw grow by its banks, is going to be thrown, fortune and all, into the arms of a beggarly Spanish clerk, a man of whom no one knows whence he came nor whither he'll go."

"He may go to the devil, who, for aught I know to the contrary, may be his father," exclaimed Paul, angrily, "before he shall marry a niece of mine! You may tell that, Master van Diest, to whomsoever pleases to spread such evil reports."

"Why, that's everybody," said Van Diest.

"Then tell everybody who speaks of what he knows not, to make less free with other people's names and affairs for the future."

"As you please, Master van Meeren," said Van Diest, somewhat affronted; "as you please—only mark me. Your niece is not the only fair or rich girl of Antwerp who is granted to a Spaniard. The town is full of such. But little do they gain by it, for widowers can lay as good claims to wives' fortunes as husbands; and a man may thus chalk out for himself a new branch of speculation. But I see I ruffle you by these allusions, my good friends; forgive me. The report about Margaret may be false after all. I will lose no time in ascertaining that, however. Times are sadly altered that I should have been so long without seeing my good friend, worthy Master Cornelius; but how to mend them is a matter to puzzle other heads than mine."

"Have you not discovered that secret yet?" inquired Kay, with a smile.

"Why," said Van Diest, throwing into his broad, self-satisfied countenance as grave and important a look as he was able, "I did not mean to infer that I was utterly ignorant of it. I know of a very simple remedy to settle all things in the right way, and bring back old days again."

"Indeed!" said Paul; "and would it be too indiscreet to inquire this simple way of achieving so great a thing?"

"All that would be required is a man of clear, sound sense, unprejudiced, like myself for instance, who would go straight up to King Philip,

and tell him how matters stand—what Antwerp was, and what it now is. That would be quite sufficient, I'll warrant you; and if he were but here in Flanders, I would be that man, Master Paul; I would talk to him for hours on the subject."

"I make no doubt," said Paul; "eloquence is not the least of your merits. But here come those who will, I am afraid, interrupt its flow for the present. My friends Legaru and Saliger, the best ministers of our reformed church, have perceived me, and are coming this way. I must hurry to meet them."

"So must not I," said Van Diest, in great perturbation, his rubicond cheeks losing all colour; and pulling his cap over his brow, he hurried away towards the nearest door. leaving the two friends to encounter the dangerous society which he had the prudence to shun.

OLD WINTER IS COMING.

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

Old Winter is coming, old Winter so drear,
His heralds, unwelcome, proclaim he is near;
There's a wail on the blast, there are voices that say,
"The spirit of Summer is passing away."

Sweet evening, the balm of thy breezes is o'er,
And bleak is the blast on mountain and moor;
There's shadow and gloom in the depths of the dell,
And the trees of the forest are moaning farewell.

Old Winter is coming, once more to rejoice
In his robings of snow, and his trappings of ice—
The dreariest of despots, who bends to his sway
Sweet sister of Summer, the beautiful day.

Dear evening, with thee no more on the green
In joyance of sport are the villagers seen;
And the music of childhood, in gambols no more,
Is borne on the breeze from the cottager's door.

All silent and chill, not a bird on the bough
Is heard forth to warble his vesper hymn now;
Not a caw from the rook, as he wingeth his flight
O'er meads where are creeping the shadows of night.

Old Winter is coming, old Winter so drear,
His heralds, unwelcome, proclaim he is near;
There's a wail on the blast, there are voices that say,
"The spirit of Summer is passing away."

BULLIES AND HYPOCRITES.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

I VIEW with much disfavour certain story-books which I believe are commonly held in great esteem by parents and tutors. The tales contained in them are generally after this order. There are two families, or two little boys, or two little girls, as the case may be. Now, it speedily appeareth that on the one side there is very sad wickedness, a very sorrowful amount of vice and immorality; while, on the other, there is exhibited a degree of virtue and godliness quite delightful to contemplate. And certainly, looking at this fact, regarding the circumstance how very much more estimable than the other is the one family, or little boy, or little girl, it does seem very unfortunate, and excites the reader's decided indignation to find, that the unrighteous parties are sure to be uppermost in the world; they are, at starting, invariably the best off, and while their lot appears to be very comfortable and enviable, the virtuous individuals, on the other hand, seem beset by a continued storm of calamity and misfortune. However, if the youthful peruser of the exciting narrative will only have a little patience, he will see that matters are all set straight in the end; and the positions occupied at the finish by the respective parties are pleasurably regarded by every good little boy or girl. For there comes to pass a most astonishing change: the bad people have a little sunshine at the outset, the bad boy or girl seem at the beginning to be more comfortably circumstanced than the more deserving; but things quickly alter—awful misfortunes after a time fall upon the wicked and crush them straightway; they become very poor and despicable—while the good people, or the pious little boy or girl—oh! what benefits accrue to them through their steadfast continuance in the right path: they become rich in most dazzling degree, and such a flood of prosperity pours in upon them at the conclusion of the story, that the juvenile reader, closing the book with tremendous emotion, resolves that most certainly, in order that he may become similarly rich, he will on no account be naughty again as long as he lives.

Now this sounds a very pleasant winding up of matters, and accords agreeably with the young reader's notions and wishes; nevertheless, out of such common ending arises this rather important drawback to the narratives in question, namely, that while they profess to present truth in the garb of fiction; while they pretend to furnish correct pictures of what takes place in the world, and to show the consequences ordinarily attending upon different courses of action, they do in reality give as erroneous a notion upon these points as can well be imagined. My dear child, don't be deceived; they seek to delude you in this matter like as they try to cheat you when they present you with a spoonful of jelly in the which there lies treacherously hid a most unpalatable powder. It is not true, that as a natural consequence of their ungodliness, the one family would in a real case become poor, neither is it in accordance with experience that the pious family would, as a necessary result of their piety, become rich. And, furthermore, don't believe that if you are a good child and behave yourself, that if you refrain from asking to be helped a fourth time to apple-tart, or resolutely eschew barley-sugar, that without a doubt you

will be blessed when you shall have arrived at manhood with unmeasured wealth. People have no business to deceive you; and, to my notion, it were better to tell you the plain truth at once, and state fairly and openly that virtue may and does bring happiness, but it by no means involves wealth; and that for the most part the people who make large fortunes are certainly not righteous to the backbone.

Now it appears to me that the people who get on best in the world may be divided into two classes—"Bullies" and "Hypocrites"—men who *force* their way and men who *win* their way—neither very estimable characters, but who have important qualifications for achieving successes in this present life, and who wisely (at least in one point of view) refrain from giving a moment's consideration to another. Let us look for a moment at one of the "bullies," and regard his most striking characteristics.

If you will have the goodness to scan those dozen men sitting together, you will almost immediately detect one of them as belonging to the class of bullies. There is something in his look that at once tells you his character. There is a hardness in his eye, an expression of bull-dog determination about his countenance, both clearly indicating a customer who will have his own way if he can, and who will prefer to gain it by forcible methods rather than any other. You hear his voice above every one else's, and he speaks with a resolute and decided air, as though he, having given his opinion, there were an end of the matter, and no one beside must say a word. Should somebody be bold enough to reply in opposition, our friend *glares* upon him, stares at him as though the speaker were giving unmistakable evidences of insanity, and then fires at him a rejoinder of blunt contradiction, garnished with something like abuse. In fact, in all he does and says, a man of this class seems to intimate that what he wishes shall be carried out, let who may oppose him; and, if resistance be offered, let the opponent look to himself. There is "I *will* have it" on his tongue, in his eye, in his knitted brow, on his firmly-compressed lips, in the manner in which he sits in his chair, in the fashion in which he walks;—he is a "bully;" he has no notion of gaining anything pleasantly; what he gets he will get by conquest; he likes fighting for fighting sake; what he wants he'll take; he would prefer snatching it from you to your putting it into his hand; he disdains kindnesses, but gloats over submission. In fact, he is a coarse, rude, selfish, disagreeable brute. I am afraid I am myself falling into something of vulgarity in describing this kind of individual; but really your coarser specimen of bully is so very disgusting an animal, he is such a nuisance, does so much mischief (for, the misfortune is, he does generally get his way, undeserving though he be), that it is a great treat to be able to say a few true words to him, without the chance of being blackguarded in return. Every one triumphs at the downfal of a bully; and there are occasions when he comes down with a run; when, his ordinary acuteness and discrimination having failed him, he has found himself involved in an unpleasant skirmish with a calm, determined individual (not a bully) who knows the right, and sticks to it, and ***will not*** be put down; who, like David advancing upon the vaunting man of Gath, with the simplest weapons and without the slightest parade, straightway settles him in the quietest and most gentlemanly style.

This is the most disagreeable description of bully. I should, however,

term every man a bully who, although he may not swagger nor talk loudly, always seeks to drive people, and force them to do that which may be agreeable to himself. Some men really seem covertly to threaten you whenever they express an opinion; there is something in the words they use, and in the manner in which they utter them, which seems to say, "There, there, that's enough—that is my opinion; adopt it, or take the consequences." And my belief is, farcical as this may appear, that in reality there *is* a spirit of this kind more or less raised in the breast of many men when they are engaged in argument. The arbitrariness one occasionally meets with is intolerable; some men look at you as though they would feel much pleasure in tomahawking you on the spot, simply through your venturing to differ with them on a simple point—and these I should term bullies; in fact, I repeat, I should designate every man a bully who has no notion of leading people, but is always for driving them; who, figuratively speaking, has a decided fondness for taking men by the shoulders and making them follow the desired path; who would never win willing obedience, but who glories in enforcing servile submission. All these men are bullies—hateful bullies. Yet it is a fact that they prosper: their vaunting, commonly speaking, does them service; they force their ungodly way, while timid men fail; and, in a thousand instances, vulgar audacity proudly raises its head and laughs aloud, while true merit, veiled by modesty, lies prostrate in the dust, and weeps in bitter humiliation.

But who is this who, advancing hastily, takes me by the hand, and, with a face radiant with smiles, and expressive of kindest feeling and sincerest gratification, intimates his extreme delight at beholding me, laments the circumstance that so long a time has elapsed since he last saw me, hopes that I have not been ill, trusts, at all events (for he does not wait to hear my reply), that I am well now—that my wife is well and my children; my family generally, and all my friends and acquaintances? Who is this?—Why, reader, this is a man who would cut my throat with a notched clasp-knife—cut my wife's throat, and the throats of my children, if he dared—that is to say, he hates me (to use a genteel expression) through thick and thin; and if he were to look out of his window one morning and see me and my family wending our way in rags and tatters to the workhouse, the having witnessed the spectacle would, I am sure, cause him to eat all the better breakfast. This man, reader, is a hypocrite, a cheat, a vile dissembler; who never allows his looks nor his words to be in accordance with his feelings; who really does not know what truth is; who—but it is of no use getting into a passion in my description of the unworthy individual—suffice it to say, that this man, and such as are like unto him, win their way by the entirely opposite method to that pursued by the bullies. Instead of pleasing nobody, they seek to please everybody—they try to make favour with everybody—endeavour to get something out of everybody; but are very cautious not to do anything for any one who cannot make them a most liberal return. They appear in an infinite number of characters; they are religious men to religious men; gay to gay men; gentlemanly to gentlemanly, and blackguardly to blackguardly. They are anything that will suit the purpose—they talk, as it were, to order; they say what it will please those whose good offices they require, to hear; and so they live on, and—hearken unto it, reader, and weep—and *prosper!* Better men have been

hung at the Old Bailey, and worthier are the greater number of burglars and highwaymen. One looks almost, in comparison, with an eye of favour upon the open desperate villain; such a man at least shows what he is, and you know how to deal with him; but the deep, cold-blooded, designing hypocrite, whose every word almost is a lie, who takes advantage of our best feelings to lay traps for us, to whom honesty and sincerity are utterly unknown, who practises every kind of artifice and treachery, who is a deadly enemy in the garb of a true friend, who knows not one spark of kind or generous feeling, who at one moment would, if it suited his purpose, wring your hand, and, in a voice faltering apparently from emotion, say "God bless you," and in the next, if matters altered, would do you a dark and deadly injury without the slightest hesitation—I say this character is, unquestionably, to my mind, to be regarded as ranking many degrees below that of the open and avowed villain.

Yet, I say, this man, to use the common phrase, "gets on." His hypocrisy is useful to him; he gains his ends through it; it enables him to steal up to his objects and clutch them securely. No wonder, then, that there are so many hypocrites—I mean, thorough and skilful hypocrites, not common dissemblers, but men who have made hypocrisy their study, and whose every-day policy is deeply marked with it. No wonder, that though to become a proficient in hypocrisy there must be a lengthened apprenticeship and most diligent application, the advantages accruing from a perfect mastery of the art cause many to give it their earnest attention. It is no use denying facts. The man who succeeds best in this present age is not the most upright or the most religious. The absolute rogue does not prosper, nor never will. The rogue is a fool; unquestionable knavery will always eventually ruin him who practises it. But, reader, there are a great many species of knavery; and, while the palpable will never answer, the unseen and intangible will, in this ungodly world of ours, always bring more profit than will open and straightforward conduct. For example: Two men starting to obtain wealth, the one shrewd, sharp, unscrupulous (taking care, however, never to lower himself in the world's estimation); the other, open, honourable, and conscientious (not caring a jot what the world might do or say, so that he felt something within him speaking approval to his soul)—of these two men, who can doubt which would win the race? The unscrupulous competitor would have the advantage, and the conscientious man be far in the rear. Yet here is the vast comfort; the latter would be, in fact, the winner. He would go through life with a lighter purse, but also with a lighter heart. The bully would be more feared, the hypocrite more smiled on; both would be more successful, and gain more money. But if you come to the question of real and true happiness—oh, I don't need to hear from the minister in the pulpit on which side the advantage would lie! The bully, with his angry looks; the hypocrite, with his smiling countenance—neither is happy; and, indeed, it would be a good exchange for them if they could give all that they have gotten through their unworthy efforts for even a modicum of that pure, bright happiness known only to men altogether their reverse.

VALDARNO; OR, THE ORDEAL OF ART-WORSHIP.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter XIV.

The calm that I experienced at this time was too deep not to be terrible. The cycle of events was tending to place Melissa in my hands, and to invest me with a power to accomplish some plan not yet unveiled, either allied to retribution, or in some way intended to relieve me of the protracted mortification her unsteady love had caused me to endure. For the first time during many years I saw the dawn of liberty, the not distant hour when the remaining links of my leaden chain would drop off; when my heart would pulsate and rebound in freedom—even leap for joy! Then would this earth be a garden, and all that gold whereon I hated to gaze be convertible into the pleasures for whose attainment others toiled so hard. So was the calm that I at first felt succeeded by a turbulence of spirit which made all deem me happy; nay, blessed by an enviable prospect, no less than that of consummated love.

How strangely are the aspects of genius misconstrued by the indifferent; but should only one who loves its possessor be present, they are understood. How was my heart touched when I saw that Giuditta, and she only, was sorrowful at my joy! So lovely a trait of nature affected me to tears, and opened a train of thoughts which might never have transpired in the mere lover, but could not fail to burst through the imagination of the poet. This clearsightedness of love was my first experience of its vivid truth, and it filled me with deep emotion.

Thus, if new sentiments were awakened, I was sensible of their alliance to poetical rather than to moral nature. Thoughts of this kind, more earnest in the cause of self-consciousness than of the love of her in whom they had a source, congregated within me, and my position in the circle which held me might have formed the centre of a fiction, so strongly my ideas tended to composition, not that of solitary thought on paper, but of the wand which might conduct human beings through the scenes of a living play. A state of mind more perverted from true humanity could not have been, and yet I was disposed to indulge in it. I saw my way into a plot teeming with revenge too refined to be acknowledged, and too sharp not to be felt acutely.

My visit was a prolonged one, and I pursued my scheme to its conclusion: the details I have not the heart to relate. Let it suffice to say, that on the evening of my departure, all measures being arranged according to a given plan, I led Giuditta into the garden that I might hear the last words of her love. We reached the side of waters which bent their course through a valley, as they received from the shaded moon irregular masses of light and shadow, and so skilfully blended that, like the two beings then present, they seemed mutually to enlighten and darken one another. In the distance, the trees looked blackly distinct; but we were visible to each other, for we sat as in a broad bath of chilling light.

"At this hour," said Giuditta, "all nature is so still and lovely, and enjoys such perfect harmony! Not so ourselves, I fear; you seem ever to

have the same dread of joy. Why, Adonai, has no kindly star presided at your birth to charm you, in spite of yourself, into affection?"

"You think still that I am a stranger to love!"

"I cannot say; if it exists at all, your love is like that of a sun which has not a companion, and looks for its equal at systems too remote to reach. Alas! that you were less in soul, or I were greater!"

"Have I, then, not loved you?"

"Yes! with the cold and protecting affection of the mountain for the flowers within its valley—nothing more."

"No higher love than that have I felt for you?"

"Well, then, what shall I say to bring your love nearer—you have loved me as this fair moonlight does the earth; investing all in beauty, but, alas! bestowing not one warm ray!"

"Ah, my Giuditta, how just is your last expression! Your loveliness is the teacher of peace, not of passion; a repose emanates from your presence,—and not the new and bustling life to which love awakens the spirit."

"Should I not then be happy?"

"Would that I could render you so by a return of the blessing you give. But the peace of another affords no peace to love: it is only the blended perturbations of uneasy hearts that can subside into the peace of love. Oh! that I had been gifted with an influence over my own fate, it then would have been my lot to aspire, and, like the fluttering zephyr, to drop enraptured on your breast."

"Your words only show that I am unworthy to be yours."

"Not so, dear Giuditta, but the reverse: you are too pure to belong to so debased a being. But we are not as we would be; the model of the soul is from afar; emotions are unwilled, and, until they declare themselves, we know not what they are to be."

"Is it only for your own peace, then, that you have thus noticed me?"

"Judge me with mercy! Oh, how can I reply to those searching words? The joys of my heart have been long gone, they were torn from me; snatched away abruptly, and they have left an inward sore. Oh! question me not thus; the pursuits of broken hearts are tranquil. Have I then stolen away your peace while I sat in its holy shade?"

"If it be peace that you have imbibed, be welcome: but I love you too well to believe that you can find peace in the destruction of my happiness."

"Again, how piercing are your words! Once was there a city in which there was much rejoicing: desolation swept over it, the walls were thrown down, the palaces dismantled and destroyed; its youth smitten with sudden age. Look at it now, and what do you behold? A heap, perhaps great in ruin, but the haunt of silence, the shelter of timid peace. Even as is that city, so am I."

"I know it—I know it well!" she replied, with impassioned and fine expression; and, linking her arms in one of mine, with her fair hands clasped, and placing her loving cheek on my shoulder, she continued mildly: "Are there not some, Adonai, who prefer, even before paradise itself, to wander amid the ruins of such a past?"

"They may love it," said I, "and they find no resistance; they are welcome, even as you are welcome now to all that remains of me. But whether they roam for meditation, or for sorrow's sake, the desolations

make no reply to their touching regard; immovable, save in their decay, they manifest only a solemn warning—visited or not, indeed they are the same."

"And why are you so like the unfeeling thing you thus describe?"

"You shall know shortly," was my reply. "Ask me no more."

"Oh, Adonai! tell me at this very hour! I feel as if my nature were changing,—passing from an old into a new birth; and that I may demand of you things which, before seeing you, were unknown to my very thoughts. Tell me why you are thus cold to me; to the ardent love you have kindled within me, and not watch my love as if it were the mere lightning of a summer sky!"

"I watch it with interest and regret."

"Oh! tell me the history of griefs which exercise this fatal influence on a heart so young and noble. What has blighted you thus that you cannot smile without effort—that your laughter is mockery? Oh, Adonai! have you then suffered for another—are you really broken-hearted at this fresh period of your age? If you believe that I love you, tell me whom you have loved; and what the anguish is that you have gone through."

"The knowledge that you seek, Giuditta, is prepared for you; all shall you know; but it must be in company with that other, and in the presence of the world."

"So let it be," she replied; "though I had hoped it would have been told me in privacy."

As she spoke her voice died away, and she sank unexpectedly upon her knees as if exhausted by long-sustained emotion. In part owing to absence of mind, I gazed unmoved on her uplifted eyes. At that moment she felt her loneliness, no sign of sympathy from me while thus she was prostrated by unrequited love. Her head dropped, she clung to my knees and wept; I heard, as a deserved curse upon me, those loud and sobbing accents which are uttered by forsaken misery alone. Hoping, she realised no hope; the future seemed, by some dread act, to have extinguished its advent, the present to be too heavily laden to advance. As she wept, her hair was loosened, and hurled over her shoulders by the mighty sob. I was affrighted at the cruelty of my work; my icy fabric melted. I raised her, and she fell into my arms with a convulsive cry. As I held thus the beauty and purity of an angel in my embrace I thought of Melissa, and tried to forgive the past; in vain; but though thus unreconciled I clasped Giuditta to my breast, whereon she continued to weep.

The night then came; it was chilly, dark, and tempestuous. The wind had risen, it passed in noisy billows over the earth; its moanings seemed to issue from the wintry sepulchres of creation; tombs which spread further to the east and to the west than the cemeteries of man; their monuments the barren rocks and the deserts, and over whose spoils the blasted and leafless forest sheds the sorrowing recollection. The night was terrible, and thunder commanded the storm.

"Early on the morrow," I said, as we entered the villa, recovering resolution to carry my purpose into effect, "it is decided that I am to quit Siena. This evening there is a midnight mass at the cathedral. If you would know my secret, what I have suffered, and for whom; if you would meet me once more let it be there, but come not without Melissa, and keep silence."

"Ever loved of earth! I will be there."

She promised, and we parted.

Thanatos met me at the door, when I said: "Have the eunuchs arrived from the Sistina chapel at Rome?"

"They have," was his reply.

"Have the priests received them at the cathedral graciously, and accepted the golden offering?"

"All has been according to your pleasure," answered Thanatos.

After giving orders respecting my departure at the conclusion of the mass, I retired, and remaining in my private apartment until the time approached for the service, I walked to the sanctuary. At midnight the carriage of the Duchess of Valisneri had arrived, and she with Giuditta had entered the dark cathedral. As they trod the aisle the dome became suddenly a blaze of light, and the silence was taken possession of and almost filled by a voice whose tone was unlike the human, so sweet and soft, so clear, so familiar with the almost boundless spaces of the church. It seemed like a servant of harmony sent forth by the immortal Palestrina to touch the heart, and render that a silence. Having done its task it was overtaken by a hundred voices as little human as itself. The "Miserere" was their theme, that anthem of the wretched, the mourner, the sufferer. Though those who sang expressed woes which they did not experience, the hearers felt the power of music, and all who attended were soon in tears—a never-failing effect even on the most frivolous and earthly-minded. Melissa and Giuditta sobbed aloud. As the union of voices swept the dome the desolating effect touched their bosoms, which heaved and fell like living waves breaking gently on the shores of eternity. It might be seen that all the vanity of their life was dissolving into the deep repentance uttered through the means of sacred music. They at times recovered themselves and conversed on the wonderful sounds, and were again affected, if possible, more deeply than before. It was what I foresaw, and, unable to restrain myself any longer, I walked to the spot where they stood, touched not less than they by the overpowering harmony. I made a sign to them to follow me, which they obeyed like children, astonished and trembling. I led the way to a small chapel which belonged to the Ferrini family; it was lighted brilliantly, and in the midst of it, wrought in ivory and gold, was placed a figure of the crucified Redeemer, that Cellini had executed for me—a work which would have made Phidias admire and grieve.

"Come, my sisters," I said; "come hither, and look upon this marvellous representation."

At the moment that they reached the chapel, and saw the figure, the music changed. It was no longer expressive of penitence, but of pain—the thorny load of sin. The one voice only was heard, and as if near,—for it seemed to issue in the language of the crucifixion, the well-known exclamation of bitterness, at the Saviour's lips. Those who were close at hand thought for a moment that the figure was actually the seat of that awful pang which once extinguished the Divine heart, that it then expressed the suffering of that most bitter hour.

"Look at the Saviour!" said I, earnestly, but calmly, as I took Giuditta's hand in mine. While I spoke, the eyes of Melissa pierced my countenance. She seemed ready to fall on the pavement, as if with feminine quickness, she had read at a glance my deliberate and unfor-

giving reproaches; but I did not heed her. Addressing myself still only to Giuditta, deeply affected, at the same time, with the remembrance of all,—my face told of agony not less true than that expressed on the sculptured figure before us,—agony such as an artist might have modelled from to tell that same story of the Divine passion over again.

"Look!" said I. "In that image, so expressive of all the agony of mind which man can endure, you may behold what I promised to reveal—how much I have suffered for another!"

The mass was finished, the crowd moved away, and I was lost in its multitudes.

Chapter XV.

My Calabrian page, Mezzofonte, and Thanatos, were in attendance with horses at the cathedral doors, in pursuance of my commands. Mounting my steed, I took an abrupt leave of Siena. The music had just ceased to pour forth its concluding tones, while conscience vibrated to the shock of its silence. The pavement, however, soon responded to the hoofs with sounds of freedom, which, accompanied by the snorting of our noble beasts, gave me relief from the yet-remembered mass and the highly-wrought emotion which had been attendant on its solemn celebration. The air was fresh after the storm, the sky clear. For the first time for many years my breast grew light, and became susceptible of pleasurable sensations. As we gaily rode along, the stillness of the night was relieved by Mezzofonte, who chanted his native airs, the sounds of which were echoed by the hills; and Thanatos occasionally joined in the gay song, or in turn sang the airs of Greece, to which his deep voice gave an effect which was very pleasing. All night we travelled over mountain and vale, and not until long after dawn reached the villa of the Duke of Savatelli, where I had engaged to pass some days. Meantime, I seemed to have left all care behind; the world looked a theatre of new enjoyment. There is a lightness of the spirit, a mild and exalted gladness, which occupies the same range as imagination itself, without its glow—a contentment in companionship with an enlarged present running evenly into the past and future alike. It is associated, nevertheless, with a retrospect of what has been; but the troubles of the past, as if stilled by a hand more potent than reason, stand apart, assented to and explained. All this I felt; and love, once so absorbing, seemed a light dream, like a flower whose agitated petals were frosted over, and reflected no burning rays. He who feels thus appears to himself to be a visitant of scenes which have the forms, but not the meaning of old.

While thus musing, and some time after having left Siena behind, my attention was of a sudden excited by the outpourings of a loud, rich voice in our rear. The last song of our party was ended, and an interval of silence was succeeded by the sounds in question. On turning our heads, we could just discern a mounted figure riding slowly after, and too much absorbed in his own concerns to heed us. His voice was so distinct that scarcely a word of it escaped our ears; and it was soon evident that his chanting was in honour of the illustrious composer to whom the mass we had that night attended was due—a proof that the stranger, also, had been at the cathedral, and had heard the unrivalled music. Between every verse that he sang he observed a pause, as if to consider what ought to follow.

We rode slowly over the turf, while, in a voice seeming to reach the sky, the eulogy of Palestrina was poured forth in these words:

The gust of harmony was let to blow,
And died too soon on the regretful ear.
Oh! ask of Heaven whence tones thus wondrous flow;
She'll answer, "Pray, such sounds to ever hear."

Thou, Palestrina, hast that home above;
Thy graces mild and high as yonder star;
Thy native melody, so full of love,
Descending on our hearts as from afar.

The happy sounds a future state betray,
And urge the soul of clay to upward rise;
When earth's last silence hurries us away
Shall strains be heard like these in paradise!

Meantime, let human sorrow heed thy song;
Smiles it attunes to sadness, tears to mirth;
Its track the voice of man shall chant along,
Though mortals cease to wonder at thy birth.

Thy mission to relieve this aching breast,
We breathe with thee an atmosphere divine;
And, while escorted to the sacred feast,
Each grateful soul accordant lives with thine.

A star burns on the vest of Deity;
Such monument can suffer no decay!
It is thy glory kindled in the sky,
Where notes of light unearthly music play.

The traveller's pace was yet slower than our own. He had ceased to sing, and we were not disposed to interrupt, by the renewal of our own songs, the meditative mood that we had fallen into. I rode on, sometimes forgetful that the stranger followed, sometimes more mindful of it than could be explained. Towards daybreak we reached the villa of Savatelli, and, without much delay, were admitted. I dismounted, and was conducted into the house. On passing a window which overlooked the court-yard, I was startled at seeing the person who had ridden in our track enter the open gate, his face muffled up as before, so as to hide his features. He led his beautiful horse aslant the yard into the stable, and disappeared. I retired to rest, but the image of the horseman continued to be present before my inward eyes, accompanied me into my light slumbers, and the first inquiry I made in the morning was concerning him; but I only received for answer that, besides ourselves, no one had arrived. On hearing this, I experienced an uneasiness almost impossible to describe.

My sister was at the villa; I saw her at a late hour in the morning, when we had a joyful meeting. I had slept soundly until noon. Angela was always happy when with me; and, at the house of our relative, we were able to pass the hours as we pleased, until evening came, when the strictest ceremony was observable throughout the mansion. The duke himself said little, but did much, for his greatness never flagged an instant; and it demands no slight effort to be always grand. The duke was gratified at my arrival, for on the same night there was a ball, and it was attended by the great families of Volterra and its vicinity. Angela and I were present when the guests, who were gracefully received by Theonöe, began to arrive. Amongst us was Thanatos, who, as my secretary, was entitled to be there. Many a wife came alone, her car-

riage, horses, domestics, formed a glittering equipage, while she only sat within. Many were ready to do her homage, but the one whom the affections dwelt on, accompanied her not; his part was reserved for the stranger.

Little as I entered society, its duties descended lightly upon me. All that I said was assented to; a word or two from me was listened to with unmerited attention, and repeated as soon as I appeared out of hearing. But I had the ear and the curiosity of a woman, nothing escaping my notice, though I did not appear to attend to anything that passed. I was amused by the dresses and manners of the party, though manifesting neither interest nor indifference in those who were present. Many were decorated with golden chains who had no other gold, and in glittering vests and gems who shone not otherwise, and in satins who in all other respects were harsh and unpolished.

"I expected our friend Angus here this morning from Rome," said Savatelli.

"And I shall not forgive him for not keeping his promise," added Theonöe.

"Angus!" replied I; "then he has been already here. It was he; his voice is now familiar to me, though it be only in recollection. How is it that I recognised it not at the time? I might have known it then, for twice before has he overtaken me on that road, and, strange as it is that it did not suggest itself at the moment, I have now no doubt that he has done so a third time."

"Signor Angus is in the house, and will soon be present," said a man in waiting; and scarce had he spoken when the individual in question entered. He looked well and in spirits. Theonöe and the duke received him warmly.

"Were you at Siena last night?" I said, waiting till he approached me, which he soon did with delightful cordiality.

"Yes," said Angus, "I heard at Rome that there was to be a grand mass of Palestrina's performed there, so I stopped on my road to hear it. I believe that we were within hearing of each other all night; at least, I learn so from the grooms."

With what different views, thought I, did we attend to the grand celebration!

"We were talking of you at the moment you entered. Aula said that you must have arrived at daybreak, though why he thinks so I do not exactly know," said the duke.

"He is right," replied Angus. "I followed him through the gates, and remained with my horse for an hour in the stable. I then went out again, and lost myself among your peasantry; and many curious things they told me, which neither you nor I were aware of before."

"Though I missed your companionship, I heard your beautiful hymn to Palestrina," said I.

"Could you hear that?" replied Angus, laughing; "the night certainly was very still. I composed it as I rode along, and sang aloud to try its merit by the ear."

Before we parted the next day, I had much conversation with Angus, but not of a satisfactory kind, in any one respect, though we talked of many things. The reason was, that our minds were pitched in different keys; his spirits ran high again like upper currents in the air, mine grovelled over the surface of the earth like a vapour. I could not take in his enlightened joy. He was full of a projected scheme, which he

hoped to accomplish should his life prove long, that of visiting every place of interest in the known world. I wished him to go home with me, but he declined. We were to meet, he said, from time to time with increased pleasure; at present, we both knew but little, and had done nothing; we, therefore, could be of no use to each other.

Such were the views of this strange man, and I felt their force, so little did I desire to open my heart to him at that moment.

Antinori was among the guests staying at the house, and seemed to be under the especial care of Theonöe. Several others of the Palleschi party were there too; for the contest was ripening, and the duke, above all men, abhorred the existing order of things.

Thanatos, as usual, shunned the women; though the graceful Theonöe herself deigned to address him, he avowed an abhorrence of them all; they were beneath the care of an intellectual being, and such he assumed himself to be. He was deeply engaged in conversing with Orazio, and I often found their eyes directed towards me, but they did not observe that I saw their looks. I learned almost as much by watching as if I had heard them; and when they regarded me, I closed my eyes and opened them in another direction. My suspicions, once awakened, never slept; and Thanatos, as well as Orazio, had become their unceasing object. The latter I had met coldly, and he seemed to feel the slight. As the music continued to flow, the spirit of dance was more diffused, the love notes grew louder; and when words had said all that they dared express, eyes took up the theme, and glance told to glance even more than lips could have repeated.

And now, these amusements ended, there was a breaking up, a general confusion and dispersion. Smiling nods were seen from shawl-covered heads, sighing and burning farewells were heard from maidens unwillingly dragged along at the arms of unfeeling brothers, and fascinating looks distinguished solitary old dames, while they awaited the announcement of their carriages. I descended the staircase to the hall, where I remained until the visitors had left, and employed myself in examining the frescoes, which were remarkable.

Yet at this time, painful as my reflections might have been, I was less occupied with Orazio's wickedness than with my own peaceful state of mind. How to explain it I scarce know; but all my late sympathies and horrors were alike lulled, and the past seemed to return upon me divested of its evils. There are no doubt many periods exempt from care in the intervals of trouble, did we but heed them, but they escape us. Let a quiet chord of memory, while in this state, be accidentally touched, and a whole train of former feelings is awakened, not in the same intensity as at the first, but, like an old and well-preserved picture, softened and mellowed by long repose. And if there have been a period of oblivion, brief though its duration, between the time when first and last that feeling came, its resurrection may recal days long past, as if all that happens had some associate but far back type amid olden records of memory; records which, unwilling to be often disturbed, have founded for themselves ancestral resting-places within the first inhabited regions of the soul. He who has studied the antiquity, as well as the immortality of the spirit, will feel these truths; he will remember that a breeze, a flower, a melody, will awaken emotion so old, that he has forgotten what it once was and to what it belonged, and before he can trace it home, it has sunk away into its mysterious repose.

The day after the ball I was seated in the study alone, listless and motionless. I was in that state of profound calm which seems to render existence itself incompatible with disquiet. Suddenly the sounds of a lute reached me; they entwined themselves round my soul, and carried me back to a period of time which appeared long antecedent to my earthly being.

A pre-existent sympathy was awakened; I felt a retrospective longing, a hope directed back into the past eternity, as if my essence had once been its companion. But it was soon over, and my soul afterwards wandered in vain amid the wastes of time to find news of its ancient home.

I approached the window and saw an aged minstrel; no sooner did he look up and repeat his melody than the strange emotion revived. But now, Angela and the musician were united in the feeling; and still it was one of time-hallowed peace. I seemed, during the momentary trance, to know the man well, who thus appeared associated in my mind with my sister. He changed the melody; the new air transported me to later times; it was one that Angela and Orazio had been wont to sing, and it recalled to my memory that Moro had once sung the first, in search of whose origin I had ranged through ages.

These are states of mind which, as it were, hallowed by the antiquity within us, assure us of a ceaseless career, and embrace more of the feeling of immortality than is awakened by reason or sudden emotion. They are like glimpses which, by the affinity of newer feelings, are caught through the darkness of the dead sea of passion, over whose undisturbed surface souls have a right to wander after death, and find that ancient peace which in life they only knew in day-dreams like these.

I was impelled to approach the minstrel whose clear and melancholy voice had thus vibrated through me. I opened the window, and, as I drew near to him, he threw back a disguise, and flung his lyre behind him: it was the pale and ghastly Moro.

"Oh, prince," said he, quite calmly, "you, too, have injured me: tell me what I have done to merit persecution at your hands? I was happy, my lot was enviable, when accident led you to adopt me into a station of life ill-becoming my birth, but assorting well with my feelings. You gave me many things, even dress and money, that I might make an appearance in society; you induced me to aspire to the favours of a princess, your lovely sister. Was I to blame because I had the spirit to respond to such a summons? You invited me to your magnificent castle, on my road to which, as if at once to dispel all my illusions, I was stabbed. I fell, thinking of your sister's beauty, for her image had burned itself into my soul. However, you did not desert me then, but showed sympathy for my misfortune. You visited my couch with compassionate looks; you promised to avenge me. After a brief delay, during which I suffered twofold martyrdom, jealousy, and the desire of revenge, you tracked the murderers to their hiding-place, and found them there. What am I to think now? Be your discovery what it may, you conceal it from me and my associates. The only friends I possess in the world have waited on you, but in vain, to learn it; and I have dragged my own weak and bleeding body to your castle to implore of you the justice which is due, and you have fled from me, as from a ghostly enemy."

"Know you the man who struck you?"

"I know his employer."

"Who is that man?"

"His name and recent marriage are perfectly familiar to you."

"Oh, God! merciful and neglected! why thus unjustly am I fated to endure this kind of suffering? I could easily bear the penalty of my own misdeeds, but my present trial, which puts in the balance a sister's fate, deprives me of all faith in Thy providence. Should I betray this brother's crime and hasten an innocent sister to the goal of her misfortunes? Wretch, begone! The sternest would fail under such a trial."

"Tremble not for your brother," said Moro; "he does not care for you."

"How so?—speak out."

"He secretly reports that you employed the assassin."

"I!—say you truly?"

"As I am a believer, I do."

"What do you think yourself about it?—tell me quickly. The surprise I feel so affects me, I cannot rebut the charge."

"My benefactor!—such I still deem you, for such would you have been—Orazio Pallavicini is the murderer, not you."

"He is! I heard it from the throats of his hirelings!"

"I believe you with a firm faith, and on your authority, since justice herself is too slow to act through her legal instruments for the benefit of a dying man, I will myself assume her service and do her behests. The criminal is here; I go to the arrest, the execution ——."

"Stay! depart not yet—I am able now to reflect. Owing to my past thoughtlessness and imprudence, you appear to have been the victim of Orazio's jealousy and your own love. These passions I excited in your breasts unprovokedly—be it mine to meet the consequences. That you should have loved my sister I lament bitterly; but, for this misfortune, I can now make you no compensation beyond adopting you as a brother; that you should have been murdered on account of such love, I solemnly mourn, and will avenge it."

"Impossible: you are not in earnest as I am; I live for nothing else."

"How? Not in earnest when I have pledged my word?"

"Your scruples must revive;—I have none to arrest my arm."

"What would you do?"

"I sentence him to instant death."

"Death!"

"I knew you could not inflict it—farewell."

"Nay, stay awhile ——."

"Let go your hold, or I strike now ——."

"Stay! in his breast palpitates my sister's heart—can you not feel pity?"

"No! I yet would tear him from her."

"No human mercy remains in thy heart! Would that I could teach thee the mercy which reigns above!"

"Name it—for the hour is come."

"The charity of Jesus."

"How well I knew it, felt it—yes, as you feel it now. It was taught me across the cradle by my mother, the mainstay of whose poverty it was on earth, and she reaps its reward in heaven—perhaps at this moment watches me thence! Thanks to her holy influence, it has softened me in many little sorrows, recalled me to myself after quarrels with friends, and made me amiable sooner than I deserved. Yet now, while I shed tears

at the recollection, and can scarce find utterance, I cast its example from me; in my impatience, spurn it as I do the shackles of the law! Oh, brother! I glory in the hope of perdition, if it be gained by a vengeance precious as this man's death is to my soul."

"Reflect, for your mother's sake. Would you not meet her above and forget all?"

"Let go your hold once more!"

"Then listen. You have alarmed me more than I can express, yet have you conquered me. Your resolution assumes an aspect so frightful in my eyes that, with cowardice still in my heart, I resolve to rescue you from a sin so surely fatal to you. Compose your spirit while yet you live: I adopt your revenge."

"Say it again!"

"Can I pause? The inevitable encompasses me. Behold, then, I give you the pledge again."

Moro leapt into the air and uttered a delirious shout of thanksgiving as I said those words; then, in an instant, turned deadly pale and fell upon my breast, panting horribly. My hand was in his gripe; he looked up at the sky, and by an imploring glance signified to me to do the same.

"Do you see Him?" he said.

"I do," replied I, fully conscious of his meaning.

"Are we together at this moment in His presence?"

"We are!"

At these last words the gripe of his hand increased to a degree which made me sensible of his agony: it was the death struggle, intertwined in the serpent-folds of revenge. Yet it was peace to him: he had buried his vengeance alive in a survivor's breast. He was, indeed, calm again for a few moments, and with a resignation worthy of a better cause, he took a last and somewhat lingering look at his Creator, in whose presence he had sworn me to be merciless, and was a heavy corpse in my arms.

My prevailing emotion at the sudden death of Moro was naturally one of horror, but it was not free from a mixture of satisfaction, as if, on thus becoming quit of a troublesome acquaintance, the responsibility attached to my oath had lapsed. Vain thought! How little did it do justice to my nature! It was but of transient duration, however; the low motive, even in the lofty mind, being often the first of many to intrude itself on the understanding. It providentially happens that in those who are susceptible of better feelings, all other motives—and among them the highest—come forward in turn, and when the sense of right has reached the ascendant, a shock at the baseness of preceding impulses is not unknown.

This, then, was the harmless being whom, in my moral panic, I had dreaded to face—harmless, because death-stricken! Yet, how awful was his thirst of blood! And he died happy, only, when he had transplanted his green and sturdy hatred to the heart of another! I felt its deep roots strike into me, as into a soil suited to nourish it. Was it to ripen there when, by nature's law, it should have perished in its then lifeless home? Aroused to a better state of mind by this event, my recent conduct at Siena appeared detestable to me—the vanishing sweetness of my own poor revenge against Melissa, while its recollection compelled me, despite myself, to make allowance for Moro's more justifiable hate—failed to any longer satisfy me: it rather, indeed, bade me meditate on the sins of many days; above all, on my seduction of Giuditta.

Yes—I had seduced her! Not the frail body which I respected, and

falsely believed myself incapable even in thought of dedicating to pollution —not the body, still strong in innocency as in beauty—but that centre of human truth and love, the soul! That had I seduced from the ways of peace, and had deemed that it would tell no tale. I found it revelling in careless joys like a dolphin on the sea-foam top; I left it panting on the lone beach by the rock-side, no prospect but the expanse of gladness it had leapt from, never to return. How wretched was I! But deserving what I suffered, I had not even the comfort to feel that my misery would be a relief to Giuditta's heart! She had become forlorn as the truly fallen, cold to shame as the despised of women, for aloud among the houses which had sheltered her during spiritual innocence, she proclaimed in the words, though not in the voice, of the harlot, that she could love no more, nor wed! New life had been kindled within her; she nurtured at her virgin breast the infant Sorrow! And she vowed, blest saint, to rear it, and dedicate it in her arms to God.

Short as my visit was at the villa of Savatelli, I had time to discover that my sister already partook of her father's destiny in marriage, and was unhappy. But she was ready at a moment's notice to be happy again; was happy still at the sight of a smile; at the sound of an affectionate word. She knew her husband's faults, though not his crime, and she learned them with daily forgiveness; while her grief, the slow sorrow of one believing herself useless to the man she loved, was perennial.

A letter reached me in due course after my return to Aula. It was from Giuditta. It was full of meaning applicable not only to me, but to those whom I had ever thought of most. It had a meaning for my poor father's fate, whose last hours were still as a present time within my memory; it had a meaning for Dione! It had a meaning for Angela, whose lot I continued to dwell on as though it were a part of mine! The sentiment which that letter breathed, the words it expressed, had already been self-uttered one by one in all our hearts; it had a meaning for us all.

"Yes," wrote Giuditta, "thou hast spoken the truth aloud in the temple of God, in the presence of man; and hast made me its sacred depository."

"Oh, it was confidence—and that reposed in me!

"Not a whisper of it shall be heard again, not a syllable divined; my thoughts mourn and pray over it through the quiet of the night; then may the delirious tongue mutter, out of the abundance of reverie, those secrets which the heart loves best!

"Thou hast taught me the one truth of religion, the grand object of revelation, which is the sacrifice of one for another!

"Thou hast suffered for another. I am thy chosen witness, and am appointed in my turn to suffer for thee! So shall grace be diffused, so the offering-up of love become a successive sacrifice, and take the circuit of the poor in spirit.

"Thou hast adorned me, not with thy affection, but with thy sorrow! Mine then be thy troubles past and to come—they are upon me; let me bear them, then, until thou art related by perfect love, as thou wilt be, to one in whose heart the blood of the Redeemer flows."

What did these last words mean? But I could endure no more.

That letter is worn out! For years I wore it next my heart, wore it to rags; and one by one the shreds were lost. And I knew it by heart, repeating it in hourly mutterings as I pressed the tattered remnants to that memory of the soul.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK THE FIRST.—ALIZON DEVICE.

Chapter I.

THE MAY QUEEN.

On a May-day, in the early part of the seventeenth century, and a most lovely May-day too, admirably adapted to usher in the merriest month of the year, and seemingly made expressly for the occasion, a wake was held at Whalley, to which all the neighbouring country folk resorted, and, indeed, many of the gentry as well, for in the good old times, when England was still Merry England, a wake had attraction for all classes alike, and especially in Lancashire; for, with pride I speak it, there were no lads, who in running, vaulting, wrestling, dancing, or in any other manly exercise, could compare with the Lancashire lads. In archery, above all, none could match them; for were not their ancestors the stout bowmen and billmen whose cloth-yard shafts and trenchant weapons won the day at Flodden? And were they not true sons of their fathers? And then, I speak it with yet greater pride, there were few, if any, lasses who could compare in comeliness with the rosy-cheeked, dark-haired, bright-eyed lasses of Lancashire.

Assemblages of this kind, therefore, where the best specimens of either sex were to be met with, were sure to be well attended, and in spite of an enactment passed in the preceding reign of Elizabeth, prohibiting "piping, playing, bear-baiting, and bull-baiting on the Sabbath-days, or on any other days, and also superstitious ringing of bells, wakes, and common feasts," they were not only not interfered with, but rather encouraged by the higher orders. Indeed, it was well known that the reigning monarch, James the First, inclined the other way, and, desirous of checking the growing spirit of Puritanism throughout the kingdom, had openly expressed himself in favour of honest recreation after evening prayers and upon holidays; and, furthermore, had declared that he liked well the spirit of his good subjects in Lancashire, and would not see them punished for indulging in lawful exercises, but that ere long he would pay them a visit in one of his progresses, and judge for himself, and if he found all things as they had been represented to him, he would grant them still further licence. Meanwhile, this expression of the royal

opinion removed every restriction, and old sports and pastimes, May games, Whitsun-ales, and morris-dances, with rush-bearings, bell-ringings, wakes, and feasts, were as much practised as before the passing of the obnoxious enactment of Elizabeth. The Puritans and Precisians discountenanced them, it is true, as much as ever, and would have put them down if they could, as savouring of papistry and idolatry, and some rigid divines thundered against them from the pulpit; but with the king and the authorities in their favour, the people little heeded these denunciations against them, and abstained not from any "honest recreation" whenever a holiday occurred.

If Lancashire was famous for wakes, the wakes of Whalley were famous even in Lancashire. The men of the district were in general a hardy, handsome race, of the genuine Saxon breed, and passionately fond of all kinds of pastime, and the women had their full share of the beauty indigenous to the soil. Besides, it was a secluded spot, in the heart of a wild mountainous region, and though occasionally visited by travellers journeying northward, or by others coming from the opposite direction, retained a primitive simplicity of manners, and a great partiality for old customs and habits.

The natural beauties of the place, contrasted with the dreary region around it, and heightened by the picturesque ruins of the ancient abbey, part of which, namely, the old abbot's lodgings, had been converted into a residence by the Asshetons, and was now occupied by Sir Ralph Assheton, while the other was left to the ravages of time, made it always an object of attraction to those residing near it; but when, on the May-day in question, there was not only to be a wake, but a maypole set on the green, and a rush-bearing, with morris-dancers besides, together with Whitsun-ale at the abbey, crowds flocked to Whalley from Wiswall, Cold Coates, and Clithero, from Ribchester and Blackburn, from Padiham and Pendle, and even from places more remote. Not only was John Lawe's of the Dragon full, but the Chequers, and the Swan also, and the roadside ale-house to boot. Sir Ralph Assheton had several guests at the abbey, and others were expected in the course of the day, while Doctor Ormerod had friends staying with him at the vicarage.

Soon after midnight, on the morning of the festival, many young persons of the village, of both sexes, had arisen, and, to the sound of horn, had repaired to the neighbouring woods, and there gathered a vast stock of green boughs and flowering branches of the sweetly-perfumed hawthorn, wild roses, and honeysuckle, with baskets of violets, cowslips, primroses, blue-bells, and other wild flowers, and returning in the same order they went forth, fashioned the branches into green bowers within the churchyard, or round about the maypole, set up on the green, and decorated them afterwards with garlands and crowns of flowers. This morning ceremonial ought to have been performed without wetting the feet; but, though some pains were taken in the matter, few could achieve the difficult task, except those carried over the dewy grass by their lusty swains. On the day before the rushes had been gathered, and the rush-cart piled, shaped, trimmed, and adorned by those experienced in the task (and it was one requiring both taste and skill, as will be seen when the cart itself shall come forth), while others had borrowed for its adornment, from the abbey and elsewhere, silver tankards, drinking cups,

spoons, ladles, brooches, watches, chains, and bracelets, so as to make an imposing show.

Day was ushered in by a merry peal of bells from the tower of the old parish church, and the ringers practised all kinds of joyous changes during the morning, and fired many a clanging volley. The whole village was early astir; and as these were times when good hours were kept; and as early rising is a famous sharpener of the appetite, especially when attended with exercise, so an hour before noon the rustics one and all sat down to dinner, the strangers being entertained by their friends, and if they had no friends, throwing themselves upon the general hospitality. The ale-houses were reserved for tippling at a later hour, for it was then customary for both gentleman and commoner, male as well as female, as will be more fully shown hereafter, to take their meals at home, and repair afterwards to houses of public entertainment for wine or other liquors. Private chambers were, of course, reserved for the gentry; but not unfrequently the squire and his friends would take their bottle with the other guests. Such was the invariable practice in the northern counties in the reign of James the First.

Soon after mid-day, and when the bells began to peal merrily again (for even ringers must recruit themselves), at a small cottage in the outskirts of the village, and close to the Calder, whose waters swept past the trimly-kept garden attached to it, two young girls were employed in attiring a third, who was to represent Maid Marian, or Queen of May, in the pageant then about to ensue. And, certainly, by sovereign and prescriptive right of beauty, no one better deserved the high title and distinction conferred upon her than this fair girl. Lovelier maiden in the whole county, and however high her degree, than this rustic damsel, it was impossible to find; and though the becoming and fanciful costume in which she was decked could not heighten her natural charms, it certainly displayed them to advantage. Upon her smooth and beautiful brow sat a gilt crown, while her dark and luxuriant hair, covered behind with a scarlet coif, embroidered with gold, and tied with yellow, white, and crimson ribands, but otherwise wholly unconfined, swept down almost to the ground. Slight and fragile, her figure was of such just proportion that every movement and gesture had an indescribable charm. The most courtly dame might have envied her fine and taper fingers, and fancied she could improve them by protecting them against the sun, or by rendering them snowy white with paste or cosmetic; but this was questionable: nothing certainly could improve the small foot and finely-turned ankle, so well displayed in the red hose and smart little yellow buskin, fringed with gold. A stomacher of scarlet cloth, braided with yellow lace in cross bars, confined her slender waist. Her robe was of carnation-coloured silk, with wide sleeves, and the gold-fringed skirt descended only a little below the knee, like the dress of a modern Swiss peasant, so as to reveal the exquisite symmetry of her limbs. Over all she wore a surcoat of azure silk, lined with white and edged with gold. In her left hand she held a red pink as an emblem of the season. So enchanting was her appearance altogether, so fresh the character of her beauty, so bright the bloom that dyed her lovely cheeks, that she might have been taken for a personification of May herself. She was indeed in the very May of life—the mingling of spring and summer in womanhood; and the tender blue eyes, bright and clear as diamonds of purest water, the

soft regular features, and the merry mouth, whose ruddy parted lips ever and anon displayed two rows of pearls, completed the similitude to the attributes of the jocund month.

Her handmaidens, both of whom were simple girls, and though not destitute of some pretensions to beauty themselves, in nowise to be compared with her, were at the moment employed in knotting the ribands in her hair, and adjusting the azure surcoat.

Attentively watching these proceedings sat on a stool, placed in a corner, a little girl, some nine or ten years old, with a basket of flowers on her knee. The child was very diminutive, even for her age, and her smallness was increased by personal deformity, occasioned by contraction of the chest, and spinal curviture, which raised her back above her shoulders; but her features were sharp and cunning, indeed almost malignant; and there was a singular and unpleasant look about the eyes, which were not placed evenly in the head. Altogether she had a strange old-fashioned look, and from her habitual bitterness of speech, as well as from her vindictive character, which, young as she was, had been displayed, with some effect, on more than one occasion, she was no great favourite with any one. It was curious now to watch the eager and envious interest she took in the progress of her sister's adornment—for such was the degree of relationship in which she stood to the May Queen—and when the surcoat was finally adjusted, and the last riband tied, she broke forth, having hitherto preserved a sullen silence.

"Weel, sister Alizon, ye may a farrently May Queen, ey mun say," she observed, spitefully, "but to my mind other Suky Worseley or Nancy Holt, here, would ha' look'd prottier."

"Nah, nah, that we shouldna," rejoined one of the damsels referred to; "there is na a lass i' Lankyshiar to hold a condle near Alizon Device."

"Fie upon ye, for an ill-favort minx, Jennet," cried Nancy Holt; "yo're jealous o' your protty sister."

"Ey jealous," cried Jennet, reddening, "an whoy the firrups should ey be jealous, ey, thou saucy jade! Whon ey grow older ey'st may a prottier May Queen than onny on you, and so the lads aw tell me."

"And so you will, Jennet," said Alizon Device, checking, by a gentle look, the jeering laugh in which Nancy seemed disposed to indulge—"so you will, my pretty little sister," she added, kissing her; "and I will 'tire you as well and as carefully as Susan and Nancy have just 'tired me."

"Mayhap ey shanna live till then," rejoined Jennet, peevishly, "and when ey'm dead an gone, an laid i't' cowld churchyard, yo an they win be sorry fo having werreted me so."

"I have never intentionally vexed you, Jennet, love," said Alizon; "and I am sure these two girls love you dearly."

"Eigh, we may allowance fo her feaw tempers," observed Susan Worseley; "fo we knoa that ailments an deformities are sure to may folk fretful."

"Eigh, there it is," cried Jennet, sharply. "My high shoulthers an sma size are always thrown i' my feace. Boh ey'st grow tall i' time, an get straight—eigh straighter than yo, Suky, wi your broad back an short neck—boh if ey dunna, whot matters it? Ey shall be feared at onny rate—ay, feared, wenches, by ye both."

"Nah doubt on't, theaw little good-fo'-nothin piece o' mischief," muttered Susan.

"Whot's that yo sayn, Suky?" cried Jennet, whose quick ears had caught the words. "Tak care whot ye do to offend me, lass," she added, shaking her thin fingers armed with talon-like claws threateningly at her, "or ey'll ask my granddame, Mother Demdike, to quieten ye."

At the mention of this name a sudden shade came over Susan's countenance. Changing colour and slightly trembling, she turned away from the child, who, noticing the effect of her threat, could not repress her triumph. But again Alizon interposed.

"Do not be alarmed, Susan," she said, "my grandmother will never harm you, I am sure; indeed, she will never harm any one; and do not heed what little Jennet says, for she is not aware of the effect of her own words, or of the injury they might do our grandmother, if repeated."

"Ey dunna wish to repeat them, or to think of 'em," sobbed Susan.

"That's good, that's kind of you, Susan," replied Alizon, taking her hand. "Do not be cross any more, Jennet. You see you have made her weep."

"Ey'm glad on it," rejoined the little girl, laughing; "let her cry on. It'll do her good, an teach her to mend her manners, and nah offend me again."

"Ey didna mean to offend ye, Jennet," sobbed Susan, "boh yo're so wrythen an marr'd, a body canna speak to please ye."

"Weel, if ye confess your fault, ey'm satisfied," replied the little girl; "boh let it be a lesson to ye, Suky, to keep guard o' your tongue i' future."

"It shall, ey promise ye," replied Susan, drying her eyes.

At this moment a door opened, and a woman entered from an inner room, having a high-crowned, conical-shaped hat on her head, and broad white pinners over her cheeks. Her dress was of dark red camlet, with high-heeled shoes. She stooped slightly, and being rather lame, supported herself on a crutch-handled stick. In age she might be between forty and fifty, but she looked much older, and her features were not at all prepossessing from a hooked nose and chin, while their sinister effect was increased by a formation of the eyes similar to that in Jennet, only more strongly noticeable in her case. This woman was Elizabeth Device, widow of John Device, about whose death there was a mystery to be inquired into hereafter, and mother of Alizon and Jennet, though how she came to have a daughter so unlike herself in all respects as the former, no one could conceive; but so it was.

"Soh, ye ha donned your finery at last, Alizon," said Elizabeth. "Your brother Jem has just run up to say that t' rush-cart has set out, and that Robin Hood an his merry men are comin' for their Queen."

"And their Queen is quite ready for them," replied Alizon, moving towards the door.

"Neigh, let's ha' a look at ye fust, wench," cried Elizabeth, staying her; "fine fitthers may fine brids—ey warrant me, now yo'n getten these May gewgaws on, yo fancy yourself a queen in arnest."

"A queen of a day, mother,—a queen of a little village festival,—nothing more," replied Alizon. "Oh, if I were a queen in right earnest, or even a great lady——"

"What would yo do?" demanded Elizabeth Device, sourly.

"I'd make you rich, mother. and build you a grand house to live in,"

replied Alizon, "much grander than Browsholme, or Downham, or Middleton."

"Pity yo're nah a queen, then, Alizon," replied Elizabeth, relaxing her harsh features into a wintry smile.

"Whot would ye do fo me, Alizon, if ye were a queen?" asked little Jennet, looking up at her.

"Why, let me see," was the reply; "I'd indulge every one of your whims and wishes. You should only need ask to have."

"Poh—poh—yo'd never content her," observed Elizabeth, testily.

"It's nah your way to try an content me, mother, even whon ye might," rejoined Jennet, who, if she loved few people, loved her mother least of all, and never lost an opportunity of testifying her dislike to her.

"Awt o'pontee, little wasp," cried her mother; "theaw desarves nowt boh whot theaw dustna get often enough—a good whipping."

"Yo hanna towd us whot yo'd do fo yurself if yo war a great lady, Alizon?" interposed Susan.

"Oh, I haven't thought about myself," replied the other, laughing.

"Ey con tell ye what she'd do, Suky," replied little Jennet, knowingly; "she'd marry Master Richard Assheton, o' Middleton."

"Jennet!" exclaimed Alizon, blushing crimson.

"It's true," replied the little girl, "ye knoa ye would, Alizon. Look at her feace," she added, with a screaming laugh.

"Howd te tonge, little plague," cried Elizabeth, rapping her knuckles with her stick, "and behave thyself, or theaw shanna go out to t' wake."

Jennet dealt her mother a bitterly vindictive look, but she neither uttered cry, nor made remark.

In the momentary silence that ensued the blithe jingling of bells was heard, accompanied by the merry sound of tabor and pipe.

"Ah! here come the rush-cart and the morris-dancers," cried Alizon, rushing joyously to the window, which, being left partly open, admitted the scent of the woodbine and eglantine by which it was overgrown, as well as the humming sound of the bees by which the flowers were invaded.

Almost immediately afterwards a frolic troop, like a band of masquers, approached the cottage, and drew up before it, while the jingling of bells ceasing at the same moment, told that the rush-cart had stopped likewise. Chief amongst the party was Robin Hood, clad in a suit of Lincoln green, with a sheaf of arrows at his back, a bugle dangling from his baldric, a bow in his hand, and a broad-leaved green hat on his head, looped up on one side, and decorated with a heron's feather. The hero of Sherwood was personated by a tall, well-limbed fellow, to whom, being really a forester of Bowland, the character was natural. Beside him stood a very different figure, a jovial friar, with shaven crown, rubicund cheeks, bull throat, and mighty paunch, covered by a russet habit, and girded in by a red cord, decorated with golden twist and tassel. He wore red hose and sandal shoon, and carried in his girdle a wallet, to contain a roast capon, a neat's tongue, or any other dainty given him. Friar Tuck, for such he was, found his representative in Ned Huddlestone, porter at the abbey, who, as the largest and stoutest man in the village, was chosen on that account to the part. Next to him came a character of no little importance, and upon whom much of the mirth of the pageant depended, and this devolved upon the village cobbler, Jack Roby, a dapper little

fellow, who fitted the part of the Fool to a nicety. With bauble in hand, and blue coxcomb hood adorned with long white ass's ears on head, with jerkin of green, striped with yellow; hose of different colours, the left leg being yellow, with a red pantoufle, and the right blue, terminated with a yellow shoe; with bells hung upon various parts of his motley attire, so that he could not move without producing a jingling sound, Jack Roby looked wonderful indeed; and was constantly dancing about, and dealing a blow with his bauble. Next came Will Scarlet, Stukeley, and Little John, all proper men and tall, attired in Lincoln green, like Robin Hood, and similarly equipped. Like him, too, they were all foresters of Bowland, owning service to the bow-bearer, Mr. Parker, of Browsholme Hall, and the representative of Little John, who was six feet and a half high, and stout in proportion, was Lawrence Blackrod, Mr. Parker's head keeper. After the foresters came Tom the Piper, a wandering minstrel, habited for the occasion in a blue doublet, with sleeves of the same colour, turned up with yellow, red hose, and brown buskins, red bonnet, and green surcoat lined with yellow. Beside the piper was another minstrel, similarly attired, and provided with a tabor. Lastly came one of the main features of the pageant, and which, together with the Fool, contributed most materially to the amusement of the spectators. This was the Hobby Horse. The hue of this spirited charger was a pinkish white, and his housings were of crimson cloth hanging to the ground, so as to conceal the rider's real legs, though a pair of sham ones dangled at the side. His bit was of gold, and his bridle red morocco leather, while his rider was very sumptuously arrayed in a purple mantle, bordered with gold, with a rich cap of the same regal hue on his head, encircled with gold, and having a red feather stuck in it. The hobby-horse had a plume of nodding feathers on his head, and careered from side to side, now rearing in front, now kicking behind, now prancing, now gently ambling, and in short indulging in playful fancies and vagaries, such as horse never indulged in before, to the imminent danger, it seemed, of his rider, and to the huge delight of the beholders. Nor must it be omitted, as it was matter of great wonderment to the lookers-on, that by some legerdemain contrivance the rider of the hobby-horse had a couple of daggers stuck in his cheeks, while from his steed's bridle hung a silver ladle, which he held now and then to the crowd, and in which, when he did so, a few coins were sure to rattle. After the hobby-horse came the maypole, not the tall pole so called, and which was already planted in the green, but a stout staff elevated some six feet above the head of the bearer, with a coronal of flowers atop, and four long garlands hanging down, each held by a morris-dancer. Then came the May Queen's gentleman-usher, a fantastic personage in habiliments of blue guarded with white, and holding a long willow wand in his hand. After the usher came the main troop of morris-dancers—the men attired in a graceful costume, which set off their light active figures to advantage, consisting of a slashed jerkin of black and white velvet, with cut sleeves left open so as to reveal the snowy shirt beneath, white hose, and shoes of black Spanish leather with large roses. Ribands were everywhere in their dresses—ribands and tinsel adorned their caps, ribands crossed their hose, and ribands were tied round their arms. In either hand they held a long white handkerchief knotted with ribands. The female morris-dancers were habited in white, decorated

like the dresses of the men; they had ribands and wreaths of flowers round their heads, bows in their hair, and in their hands long white knotted kerchiefs.

In the rear of the performers in the pageant came the rush-cart, drawn by a team of eight stout horses, with their manes and tails tied with ribands, their collars fringed with red and yellow worsted, and hung with bells, which jingled blithely at every movement, and their heads decked with flowers. The cart itself consisted of an enormous pile of rushes, banded and twisted together, rising to a considerable height, and terminated in a sharp ridge, like the point of a Gothic window. The sides and top were decorated with flowers and ribands, and there were eaves in front and at the back, and on the space within them, which was covered with white paper, were strings of gaudy flowers, embedded in moss, amongst which were suspended all the ornaments and finery that could be collected for the occasion: to wit, flagons of silver, spoons, ladles, chains, watches, and bracelets, so as to make a brave and resplendent show. The wonder was, how articles of so much value would be trusted forth on such an occasion; but nothing was ever lost. On the top of the rush-cart, and bestriding its sharp ridges, sat half a dozen men, habited somewhat like the morris-dancers, in garments bedecked with tinsel and ribands, holding garlands formed by hoops, decorated with flowers, and attached to poles ornamented with silver paper, cut into various figures and devices, and diminishing gradually in size as they rose to a point, where they were crowned with wreaths of daffodils.

A large crowd of rustics, of all ages, accompanied the morris-dancers and rush-cart.

This gay troop having come to a halt, as described, before the cottage, the gentleman-usher entered it, and tapping against the inner door with his wand, took off his cap as soon as it was opened, and bowing deferentially to the ground, said he was come to invite the Queen of May to join the pageant, and that it only awaited her presence to proceed to the green. Having delivered this speech in as good set phrase as he could command, and being the parish clerk and schoolmaster to boot, Sampson Harrop by name, he was somewhat more polished than the rest of the hinds; and having, moreover, received a gracious response from the May Queen, who condescendingly replied that she was quite ready to accompany him, he took her hand, and led her ceremoniously to the door, whither they were followed by the others.

Loud was the shout that greeted Alizon's appearance, and tremendous was the pushing to obtain a sight of her; and so much was she abashed by the enthusiastic greeting, which was wholly unexpected on her part, that she would have drawn back again, if it had been possible; but the usher led her forward, and Robin Hood and the foresters having bent the knee before her, the hobby-horse began to curvet anew among the spectators, and tread on their toes, the fool to rap their knuckles with his bauble, the piper to play, the taborer to beat his tambourine, and the morris-dancers to toss their kerchiefs over their heads. Thus the pageant being put in motion, the rush-cart began to roll on, its horses' bells jingling merrily, and the spectators cheering lustily.

Chapter II.

THE BLACK CAT AND THE WHITE DOVE.

Little Jennet watched her sister's triumphant departure with a look in which there was far more of envy than sympathy, and when her mother took her hand to lead her forth she would not go, but saying she did not care for any such idle sights, went back sullenly to the inner room. When there, however, she could not help peeping through the window, and saw Susan and Nancy join the revel rout, with feelings of increased bitterness.

"Ey wish it would rain an spile their finery," she said, sitting down on her stool, and plucking the flowers from her basket in pieces. "An yet, why canna ey enjoy such seets like other folk? Truth is, ey've nah heart for it."

"Folks say," she continued, after a pause, "that grandmother Demdike is a witch, an con do os she pleases. Ey wonder if she made Alizon so protty. Nah, that canna be, fo' Alizon's na favourite o' hern. If she loves onny one, it's me. Why dunna she make me good-looking, then? They say it's sinfu' to be a witch—if so, how cums grandmother Demdike to be one? Boh ey'n observed that those folk os caws her witch are afeard on her, so it may be pure spite o' their pert."

As she thus mused, a great black cat belonging to her mother, which had followed her into the room, rubbed himself against her, putting up his back, and purring loudly.

"Ah, Tib," said the little girl, "how are ye, Tib? Ey didna knoa ye were here. Lemme ask ye some questions, Tib?"

The cat mewed, looked up, and fixed his great yellow eyes upon her.

"One 'ud think ye onderstud whot wos said to ye, Tib," pursued little Jennet. "We'n see whot ye say to this! Shan ey ever be Queen o' May, like sister Alizon?"

The cat mewed in a manner that the little girl found no difficulty in interpreting the reply into "No."

"How's that, Tib?" cried Jennet, sharply. "If ey thought ye meant it, ey'd beat ye, sirrah. Answer me another question, ye saucy knave. Who will be luckiest, Alizon or me?"

This time the cat darted away from her, and made two or three skirmishes round the room, as if gone suddenly mad.

"Ey con may nowt o' that," observed Jennet, laughing.

All at once the cat bounded upon the chimney board, over which was placed a sampler, worked with the name "Alizon."

"Why, Tib really seems to onderstond me, ey declare," observed Jennet, uneasily. "Ey should like to ask him a few more questions, if ey durst," she added, regarding with some distrust the animal, who now returned, and began rubbing against her as before. "Tib—Tib!"

The cat looked up, and mewed.

"Protty Tib—sweet Tib," continued the little girl, coaxingly. "Whot mun one do to be a witch like grandmother Demdike?"

The cat again dashed twice or thrice madly round the room, and then stopping suddenly at the hearth, sprang up the chimney.

"Ey'n frightened ye away ot onny rate," observed Jennet, laughing. "And yet it may mean summot," she added, reflecting a little, "fo' ey'n

heerd say os how witches fly up chimleys o' broomsticks to attend their sabbaths. Ey should like to fly i' that manner, an change myself into another shape—onny shape boh my own. Oh that ey could be os protty os Alizon! Ey dunna knoa whot ey'd nah do to be like her!"

Again the great black cat was beside her, rubbing against her, and purring. The child was a good deal startled, for she had not seen him return, and the door was shut, though he might have come in through the open window, only she had been looking that way all the time, and had never noticed him. Strange!

"Tib," said the child, patting him, "thou hasna answered my last question—how is one to become a witch?"

As she made this inquiry the cat suddenly scratched her in the arm, so that the blood came. The little girl was a good deal frightened, as well as hurt, and withdrawing her arm quickly, made a motion of striking the animal. But starting backwards, erecting his tail, and spitting, the cat assumed such a formidable appearance, that she did not dare to touch him, and she then perceived that some drops of blood stained her white sleeve, giving the spots a certain resemblance to the letters J. and D., her own initials.

At this moment, when she was about to scream for help, though she knew no one was in the house, all having gone away with the May-day revellers, a small white dove flew in at the open window, and skimming round the room, alighted near her. No sooner had the cat caught sight of this beautiful bird, than instead of preparing to pounce upon it, as might have been expected, he instantly abandoned his fierce attitude, and uttering a sort of howl, sprang up the chimney as before. But the child scarcely observed this, her attention being directed towards the bird, whose extreme beauty delighted her. It seemed quite tame too, and allowed itself to be touched, and even drawn towards her, without an effort to escape. Never, surely, was seen so beautiful a bird—with such milk-white feathers, such red legs, and such pretty yellow eyes, with crimson circles round them! So thought the little girl, as she gazed at it, and pressed it to her bosom. In doing this, gentle and good thoughts came upon her, and she reflected what a nice present this pretty bird would make to her sister Alizon on her return from the merry-making, and how pleased she should feel to give it to her. And then she thought of Alizon's constant kindness to her, and half reproached herself with the poor return she made for it, wondering she could entertain any feelings of envy towards one so good and amiable. All this while the dove nestled in her bosom.

While thus pondering, the little girl felt an unaccountable drowsiness steal over her, and presently afterwards dropped asleep, when she had a very strange dream. It seemed to her that there was a contest going on between two spirits, a good one and a bad—the bad one being represented by the great black cat, and the good spirit by the white dove. What they were striving about she could not exactly tell, but she felt that the conflict had some relation to herself. The dove at first appeared to have but a poor chance against the claws of its sable adversary, but the sharp talons of the latter made no impression upon the white plumage of the bird, which now shone like silver armour, and in the end the cat fled, yelling as it darted off—"Thou art victorious now, but her soul shall yet be mine."

Something awakened the little sleeper at the same moment, and she felt very much terrified at her dream, as she could not help thinking her own soul might be the one in jeopardy, and her first impulse was to see whether the white dove was safe. Yes, there it was still nestling in her bosom, with its head under its wing.

Just then she was startled at hearing her own name pronounced by a hoarse voice, and looking up she beheld a tall young man standing at the window. He had a somewhat gipsy look, having a dark olive complexion, and fine black eyes, though set strangely in his head, like those of Jennet and her mother, coal-black hair, and very prominent features, of a sullen and almost savage cast. His figure was gaunt but very muscular, his arms being extremely long, and his hands unusually large and bony—personal advantages which made him a formidable antagonist in any rustic encounter, and in such he was frequently engaged, being of a very irascible temper and turbulent disposition. He was clad in a holiday suit of dark green serge, which fitted him well, and carried a nosegay in one hand and a stout blackthorn cudgel in the other. This young man was James Device, son of Elizabeth, and some four or five years older than Alizon. He did not live with his mother in Whalley, but in Pendle Forest, near his old relative, Mother Demdike, and had come over that morning to attend the wake.

"Whot are ye abowt, Jennet?" inquired James Device, in tones naturally hoarse and deep, and which he took as little pains to soften, as he did to polish his manners, which were more than ordinarily rude and churlish.

"Whot are ye abowt, ey sey, wench?" he repeated. "Why dunna ye go to t' green to see the morris-dancers foot it round t' maypow? Cum along wi' me."

"Ey dunna want to go, Jem," replied the little girl.

"Boh yo shan go, ey tell ye," rejoined her brother; "ye shan see your sister dawnce. Ye con sit a whoa monny day; boh May-day cums ony wonst a year, an Alizon winna be Queen twice i' her life. Soh cum along wi' me, dereckly, or ey'n may ye."

"Ey should like to see Alizon dance, an so ey win go wi' ye, Jem," replied Jennet, getting up, "otherwise your orders shouldna may me stir, ey con tell ye."

As she came out, she found her brother whistling the blithe air of "Green Sleeves," cutting strange capers, in imitation of the morris-dancers, and whirling his cudgel over his head instead of a kerchief. The gaiety of the day seemed infectious, and to have seized even him. People stared to see Black Jem, or Surly Jem, as he was indifferently called, so joyous, and wondered what it could mean. He then fell to singing a snatch of a local ballad at that time in vogue in the neighbourhood:—

"If thou wi' nah my secret tell,
Ne bruit abroad i' Whalley parish,
An swear to keep my counsel well,
Ey win declare my day of marriage."

"Cum along, lass," he cried, stopping suddenly in his song, and snatching his sister's hand. "What han ye getten there, lapped up i' your kirtle, eh?"

"A white dove," replied Jennet, determined not to tell him anything about her strange dream.

"A white dove!" echoed Jem. "Gi' it me, an ey'n wring its neck, an get it roasted for supper."

"Ye shah do nah such thing, Jem," replied Jennet. "Ey mean to gi' it to Alizon."

"Weel, weel, that's reet," rejoined Jem, blandly, "it'll may a protty offering. Let's look at it."

"Nah, nah," said Jennet, pressing the bird gently to her bosom, "neaw one shan see it efore Alizon."

"Cum along, then," cried Jem, rather testily, and mending his pace, "or we'st be too late fo' t' round. Whoy yo'n scratted yourself," he added, noticing the red spots on her sleeve.

"Han ey?" she rejoined, evasively. "Oh, now ey rekilect it wos Tib did it."

"Tib!" echoed Jem, gravely, and glancing uneasily at the marks.

Meanwhile, on quitting the cottage, the May-day revellers had proceeded slowly towards the green, increasing the number of their followers at each little tenement they passed, and being welcomed everywhere with shouts and cheers. The hobby-horse curvetted and capered; the Fool fleered at the girls, and flouted the men, jesting with every one, and when failing in a point rapping the knuckles of his auditors; Friar Tuck chucked the pretty girls under the chin, in defiance of their sweethearts, and stole a kiss from every buxom dame that stood in his way, and then snapped his fingers, or made a broad grimace at the husband; the piper played, and the taborer rattled his tambourine; the morris-dancers tossed their kerchiefs aloft; and the bells of the rush-cart jingled merrily; the men on the top being on a level with the roofs of the cottages, and the summits of the haystacks they passed, but in spite of their exalted position jesting with the crowd below. But in spite of these multiplied attractions, and in spite of the gambols of Fool and Horse, though the latter elicited prodigious laughter, the main attention was fixed on the May Queen, who tripped lightly along by the side of her faithful squire, Robin Hood, followed by the three bold foresters of Sherwood, and her usher.

In this way they reached the green, where already a large crowd was collected to see them, and where in the midst of it, and above the heads of the assemblage, rose the lofty maypole, with all its flowery garlands glittering in the sunshine, and its ribands fluttering in the breeze. Pleasant was it to see those cheerful groups, composed of happy rustics, youths in their holiday attire, and maidens neatly habited too, and fresh and bright as the day itself. Summer sunshine sparkled in their eyes, and weather and circumstance as well as genial natures disposed them to enjoyment. Every lass above eighteen had her sweetheart, and old couples nodded and smiled at each other when any tender speech, broadly conveyed but tenderly conceived, reached their ears, and said it recalled the days of their youth. Pleasant was it to hear such honest laughter, and such good homely jests.

Laugh on, my merry lads, you are made of good old English stuff, loyal to church and king, and while you, and such as you, last, our land will be in no danger from foreign foe! Laugh on, and praise your sweethearts how you will. Laugh on, and blessings on your honest hearts!

The frolic train had just reached the precincts of the green, when the usher waving his wand aloft, called a momentary halt, announcing that Sir Ralph Assheton and the gentry were coming forth from the abbey gate to meet them.

A MIDNIGHT DRIVE.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

I WAS sitting one night in the general coach-office in the town of ——, reflecting upon the mutability of human affairs, and taking a retrospective glance at those times when I held a very different position in the world, when one of the porters of the establishment entered the office, and informed the clerk that the coach, which had long been expected, was in sight, and would be at the inn in a few minutes. I believe it was the old Highflyer, but at this distance of time I cannot speak with sufficient certainty. The strange story I am about to relate occurred when stage-coaches were the usual mode of conveyance, and long before any more expeditious system of travelling had engaged the attention of mankind.

I continued to sit by the fire till the coach arrived, and then walked into the street to count the number of the passengers, and observe their appearance. I was particularly struck with the appearance of one gentleman, who had ridden as an inside passenger. He wore a large black cloak, deeply trimmed with crape; his head was covered with a black travelling-cap, surmounted with two or three crape rosettes, and from which depended a long black tassel. The cap was drawn so far over his eyes that he had some difficulty to see his way. A black scarf was wrapped round the lower part of his face, so that his countenance was completely concealed from my view. He appeared anxious to avoid observation, and hurried into the inn as fast as he could. I returned to the office and mentioned to the clerk the strange appearance of the gentleman in question, but he was too busy to pay any attention to what I had said.

Presently afterwards a porter brought a small carpet-bag into the office, and placed it upon the table.

"Whose bag is that, Timms?" inquired the clerk.

"I don't wish to be personal," replied the man, "but I think it belongs to ——," and the fellow pointed to the floor.

"You don't mean *him*, surely?" said the clerk.

"Yes, I do though; at any rate, if he is not the gentleman I take him for, he must be a second cousin of his, for he is the most unaccountable individual that ever I clapped my eyes on. There is not much good in him, I'll be bound."

I listened with breathless anxiety to these words. When the man had finished, I said to him,

"How was the gentleman dressed?"

"In black."

"Had he a cloak on?"

"Yes."

"A travelling-cap drawn over his eyes?"

"Yes."

"It's the man I saw descend from the coach," I said to the clerk.

"Where is he?" inquired that gentleman.

"In the inn," replied the porter.

"Is he going to stay all night?" I inquired.

"I don't know."

"It's very odd," observed the clerk, and he put his pen behind his ear, and placed himself in front of the fire; "very odd," he repeated.

"It don't look well," said the porter; "not at all."

Some further conversation ensued upon the subject, but as it did not tend to throw any light upon the personage in question, it is unnecessary for me to relate it.

Awhile afterwards, the clerk went into the hotel to learn, if possible, something more relative to this singular visitor. He was not absent more than a few minutes, and when he returned his countenance, I fancied, was more sedate than usual. I asked him if he had gathered any further information.

"There is nobody knows anything concerning him," he replied; "for when the servants enter the room, he always turns his back towards them. He has not spoken to a single individual since he arrived. There is a man who came by the same coach, who attends upon him, but he does not look like a servant."

"There is something extraordinary in his history, or I am much deceived."

"I am quite of your opinion," observed the clerk.

Whilst we were conversing, some persons entered the office to take places by the mail, which was to leave early on the following morning. I hereupon departed, and entered the inn with the view of satisfying my curiosity, if possible, which was now raised to the utmost pitch. The servants, I remarked, moved about more silently than usual, and sometimes I saw two or three of them conversing together, *sotto voce*, as though they did not wish their conversation to be overheard by those around them. I knew the room that the gentleman occupied, and stealthily and unobserved stole up to it, hoping to hear or see something that might throw some light upon his character. I was not, however, gratified in either respect.

I hastened back to the office and resumed my seat by the fire. The clerk and I were still conversing upon the subject, when one of the girls came in, and informed me that I was to get a horse and gig ready immediately, to drive a gentleman a distance of fifteen or twenty miles.

"To-night!" I said, in surprise.

"Immediately!"

"Why, it's already ten o'clock!"

"It's the master's orders; I cannot alter them," tartly replied the girl.

This unwelcome intelligence caused me to commit a great deal of sin, for I made use of a number of imprecations and expressions which were quite superfluous, and perfectly unavailing. It was not long before I was ready to commence the journey. I chose the fastest and strongest animal in the establishment, and one that had never failed me in an emergency. I lit the lamps, for the night was intensely dark, and I felt convinced that we should require them. The proprietor of the hotel gave me a paper, but told me not to read it till we had proceeded a few miles on the road, and informed me at the same time in what direction to drive. The paper, he added, would give me further instructions.

I was seated in the vehicle, busily engaged in fastening the leathern apron on the side on which I sat, in order to protect my limbs from the

cold, when somebody seated himself beside me. I heard the landlord cry, "Drive on;" and, without looking round, I lashed the mare into a very fast trot. Even now, whilst I write, I feel in some degree the trepidation which stole over me when I discovered who my companion was. I had not gone far before I was made acquainted with this astounding fact. It was as though an electric shock had suddenly and unexpectedly been imparted to my frame, or as, in a moment of perfect happiness, I had been hastily plunged into the greatest danger and distress. A benumbing chilliness ran through me, and my mouth all at once became dry and parched. Whither was I to drive? I knew not. Who and what was my companion? I was equally ignorant. It was the man dressed so fantastically whom I had seen alight from the coach; whose appearance and inexplicable conduct had alarmed a whole establishment; whose character was a matter of speculation to everybody with whom he had come in contact. This was the substance of my knowledge. For aught I knew, he might be—— But no matter. The question that most concerned me was, how was I to extricate myself from this dilemma? Which was the best course to adopt? To turn back, and declare I would not travel in such a night, with so strange a person, or to proceed on my journey? I greatly feared the consequences of the former step would be fatal to my own interests. Besides, I should be exposed to the sneers and laughter of all who knew me. No: I had started, and I would proceed, whatever might be the issue of the adventure.

In a few minutes we had emerged from the town. My courage was now put to the severest test. The cheerful aspect of the streets, and the light thrown from the lamps and a few shop-windows, had hitherto buoyed me up, but my energy and firmness, I felt, were beginning to desert me. The road on which we had entered was not a great thoroughfare at any time, but at that late hour of the night I did not expect to meet either horseman or pedestrian to enliven the long and solitary journey. I cast my eyes before me, but could not discern a single light burning in the distance. The night was thick and unwholesome, and not a star was to be seen in the heavens. There was another matter which caused me great uneasiness. I was quite unarmed, and unprepared for any attack, should my companion be disposed to take advantage of that circumstance. These things flashed across my mind, and made a more forcible impression than they might otherwise have done, from the fact of a murder having been committed in the district only a few weeks before, under the most aggravated circumstances. An hypothesis suggested itself. Was this man the perpetrator of that deed,—the wretch who was endeavouring to escape from the officers of justice, and who was stigmatised with the foulest, the blackest crime that man could be guilty of? Appearances were against him. Why should he invest himself with such a mystery? Why conceal his face in so unaccountable a manner? What but a man conscious of great guilt, of the darkest crimes, would so furtively enter an inn, and afterwards steal away under the darkness of the night, when no mortal eye could behold him? If he was sensible of innocence, he might have deferred his journey till the morning, and faced, with the fortitude of a man, the broad light of day, and the scrutiny of his fellow-men. I say, appearances were against him, and I felt more and more convinced, that whatever his character was—

whatever his deeds might have been—that the present journey was instigated by fear and apprehension for his personal safety. But was I to be the instrument of his deliverance? Was I to be put to all this inconvenience in order to favour the escape of an assassin? The thought distracted me. I vowed that it should not be so. My heart chafed and fretted at the task that had been put upon me. My blood boiled with indignation at the bare idea of being made the tool of so unhallowed a purpose. I was resolved. I ground my teeth with rage. I grasped the reins with a tighter hold. I determined to be rid of the man,—nay, even to attempt to destroy him rather than it should be said that I had assisted in his escape. At some distance further on there was a river suitable for that purpose. When off his guard, he could in a moment be pushed into the stream; in certain places it was sufficiently deep to drown him. One circumstance perplexed me. If he escaped, he could adduce evidence against me. No matter; it would be difficult to prove that I had any intention of taking away his life. But should he be the person I conceived, he would not dare to come forward.

Hitherto we had ridden without exchanging a word. Indeed, I had only once turned my eyes upon him since we started. The truth was, I was too busy with my own thoughts,—too intent upon devising some plan to liberate myself from my unparalleled situation. I now cast my eyes furtively towards him. I shuddered as I contemplated his proximation to myself. I fancied I already felt his contaminating influence. The cap, as before, was drawn over his face; the scarf muffled closely round his chin, and only sufficient space allowed for the purpose of respiration. I was most desirous of knowing who he was; indeed, had he been "the Man with the Iron Mask," so many years incarcerated in the French Bastile, he could scarcely have excited a greater curiosity.

I deemed it prudent to endeavour to draw him into conversation, thinking that he might drop some expression that would, in some measure, tend to elucidate his history. Accordingly, I said,

"It's a very dark, unhealthy night, sir."

He made no reply. I thought he might not have heard me.

"A bad night for travelling!" I shouted, in a loud tone of voice.

The man remained immovable, without in the least deigning to notice my observation. He either did not wish to talk, or he was deaf. If he wished to be silent, I was contented to let him remain so.

It had not occurred to me till now that I had received a paper from the landlord which would inform me whither my extraordinary companion was to be conveyed. My heart suddenly received a new impulse—it beat with hope and expectation. This document might reveal to me something more than I was led to expect; it might unravel the labyrinth in which I was entangled, and extricate me from all further difficulty. But how was I to decipher the writing? There was no other means of doing so than by stopping the vehicle and alighting, and endeavouring to read it by the aid of the lamp, which, I feared, would afford but a very imperfect light after all. Before I had recourse to this plan, I deemed it expedient to address once more my taciturn companion.

"Where am I to drive you to?" I inquired, in so loud a voice that the mare started off at a brisker pace, as though I had been speaking to her. I received no reply, and, without further hesitation, I drew in the reins,

pulled the paper from my pocket, and alighted. I walked to the lamp, and held the paper as near to it as I could. The handwriting was not very legible, and the light afforded me so weak, that I had great difficulty to discover its meaning. The words were few and pointed. The reader will judge of my surprise when I read the following laconic sentence:—"*Drive the gentleman to Grayburn Churchyard!*" I was more alarmed than ever; my limbs shook violently, and in an instant I felt the blood fly from my cheeks. What did my employer mean by imposing such a task upon me? My fortitude in some degree returned, and I walked up to the mare and patted her on the neck.

"Poor thing—poor thing!" I said; "you have a long journey before you, and it may be a dangerous one."

I looked at my companion, but he appeared to take no notice of my actions, and seemed as indifferent as if he were a corpse. I again resumed my seat, and in part consoled myself with the prospect of being speedily rid of him in some way or other, as the river I have already alluded to was now only two or three miles distant. My thoughts now turned to the extraordinary place to which I was to drive—Grayburn Churchyard! What could the man do there at that hour of the night? Had he somebody to meet?—something to see or obtain? It was incomprehensible—beyond the possibility of human divination. Was he insane, or was he bent upon an errand perfectly rational, although for the present wrapped in the most impenetrable mystery? I am at a loss for language adequate to convey a proper notion of my feelings on that occasion. He shall never arrive, I internally ejaculated, at Grayburn Churchyard; he shall never pass beyond the stream, which even now I almost heard murmuring in the distance! Heaven forgive me for harbouring such intentions! but when I reflected that I might be assisting an assassin to fly from justice, I conceived I was acting perfectly correct in adopting any means (no matter how bad) for the obviation of so horrid a consummation. For aught I knew, his present intention might be to visit the grave of his victim, for now I remembered that the person who had so lately been murdered was interred in this very churchyard.

We gradually drew nearer to the river. I heard its roaring with fear and trepidation. It smote my heart with awe when I pondered upon the deed I had in contemplation. I could discover, from its rushing sound, that it was much swollen, and this was owing to the recent heavy rains. The stream in fine weather was seldom more than a couple of feet deep, and could be crossed without danger or difficulty; there however were places where it was considerably deeper. On the occasion in question, it was more dangerous than I had ever known it. There was no bridge constructed across it at this place, and people were obliged to get through it as well as they could. Nearer and nearer we approached. The night was so dark that it was quite impossible to discern anything. I could feel the beatings of my heart against my breast,—a cold, clammy sweat settled upon my brow, and my mouth became so dry that I fancied I was choking. The moment was at hand that was to put my resolution to the test. A few yards only separated us from the spot that was to terminate my journey, and, perhaps, the mortal career of my incomprehensible companion. The light of the lamps threw a dull, lurid gleam upon the surface of the water. It rushed furiously past, surging and boiling as it

leaped over the rocks that here and there intersected its channel. Without a moment's hesitation, I urged the mare forward, and in a minute we were in the midst of the stream. It was a case of life or death! The water came down like a torrent—its tide was irresistible. There was not a moment to be lost. My own life was at stake. With the instinctive feeling of self-preservation, I drove the animal swiftly through the dense body of water, and in a few seconds we had gained the opposite bank of the river. We were safe, but the opportunity of ridding myself of my companion was rendered, by the emergency of the case, unavailable.

I know not how it was, but I suddenly became actuated by a new impulse. Wretch though he was, he had intrusted his safety, his life, into my hands. There was, perhaps, still some good in the man; by enabling him to escape, I might be the instrument of his eternal salvation. He had done me no injury, and at some period of his life he might have rendered good offices to others. I pitied his situation, and determined to render him what assistance I could. I applied the whip to the mare. In a moment she seemed to be endowed with supernatural energy and swiftness. Though he was a murderer—though he was henceforth to be driven from society as an outcast, he should not be deserted in his present emergency. On, on we sped; hedges, trees, houses were passed in rapid succession. Nothing impeded our way. We had a task to perform—a duty to fulfil; dangers and difficulties fled before us. A human life depended upon our exertions, and every nerve required to be strained for its preservation. On, on we hurried. My enthusiasm assumed the appearance of madness. I shouted to the mare till I was hoarse, and broke the whip in several places. Although we comparatively flew over the ground, I fancied we did not go fast enough. My body was in constant motion, as though it would give an impetus to our movements. My companion appeared conscious of my intentions, and, for the first time, evinced an interest in our progress. He drew out his handkerchief, and used it incessantly as an incentive to swiftness. Onward we fled. We were all actuated by the same motive. This concentration of energy gave force and vitality to our actions.

The night had hitherto been calm, but the rain now began to descend in torrents, and at intervals we heard distant peals of thunder. Still we progressed; we were not to be baffled, not to be deterred; we would yet defy pursuit. Large tracts of country were passed over with amazing rapidity. Objects, that at one moment were at a great distance, in another were reached, and in the next left far behind. Thus we sped forward—thus we seemed to annihilate space altogether. We were endowed with superhuman energies—hurried on by an impulse, involuntary and irresistible. My companion became violent, and appeared to think we did not travel quick enough. He rose once or twice from his seat, and attempted to take the remnant of the whip from my hand, but I resisted, and prevailed upon him to remain quiet.

How long we were occupied in this mad and daring flight, I cannot even conjecture. We reached, at length, our destination; but, alas! we had no sooner done so, than the invaluable animal that had conveyed us thither dropped down dead!

My companion and I alighted. I walked up to where the poor animal

lay, and was busy deploring her fate, when I heard a struggle at a short distance. I turned quickly round, and beheld the mysterious being with whom I had ridden so fatal a journey, in the custody of two powerful looking men.

"Ha, ha! I thought he would make for this here place," said one of them. "He still has a hankering after his mother's grave. When he got away before, we nabbed him here."

The mystery was soon cleared up. The gentleman had escaped from a lunatic asylum, and was both deaf and dumb. The death of his mother, a few years before, had caused the mental aberration.

The horrors of the night are impressed as vividly upon my memory as though they had just occurred. The expenses of the journey were all defrayed, and I was presented with a handsome gratuity. I never ceased, however, to regret the loss of the favourite mare.

VALDARNO; OR, THE ORDEAL OF ART-WORSHIP.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter XVI.

I caused the body of Moro to be conveyed to the castle for interment. After being embalmed, it was stretched upon a bier in the private chapel, with heraldic honours, and their pompous accompaniments. Armorial bearings were emblazoned upon a standard—a mulberry-tree, with the fruit fallen, crested by a hand and dagger, and surmounted by the motto, "Vengeance is mine." This was raised above the bier, and it floated among ancient monuments of the dead.

The castle was now a scene of mourning; and of such a kind! I had resolved to bring Orazio and the murderers of Moro face to face at the funeral, that the former might be aware that he was watched by men—that his evil deeds were visible. Besides Piombino and Montecatino, therefore, Scoronconcolo and his twelve, of which number was Thanatos, were present, all armed, and richly attired in Spanish costume; and, lastly, Orazio and his bride. Much surprise was manifested by all at such an assemblage having been thus brought together, for though the brigand was introduced under the old name of Brancaleone, he was easily recognised; and Orazio would have quitted the castle had not my retainers, who at that time formed a band of fifty men, acted under orders to permit no one to depart.

I had not declared my motive to any of the party, the friends of Moro excepted, in congregating these strange characters under my roof; and even when the funeral service began, it was supposed that mass was to be celebrated only for Moro's soul, an intimation to that effect having been made just as the sound of trumpet summoned us to the chapel. The announcement was variously received; some were willing to decline attendance altogether; but my orders were peremptory, and all were speedily assured that they must be obeyed. But while objecting to the

mass for the unfortunate soul of the deceased, the party most concerned had not a remote suspicion that they should have to encounter the body of their victim.

I had again obtained the aid of the great Palestrina, who, in compliance with my wish, adapted a hymn to solemn music, and composed a fresh mass for the present occasion. The hour of divine service being at hand, the visitors and members of the household, escorted by my band of followers, crossed to the chapel, which was in the court, while the retainers themselves stood around the door outside, with their arms displayed.

"And thou wouldst have lived a prince," thought I, on reaching the bier, "and all owing to me. But though disappointed of honour and felicity during life, posterity shall regard thy name with envy, for in princely state shall thy remains lie and await the judgment."

Having paused while my sentiments were thus silently uttered, I passed on. As the others descended the steps into the chapel after me, there was a general expression of surprise, for the space was narrow, and the body met all eyes in an instant. Each, as he moved along, paused to glance over the well-preserved features, those of the most beautiful face on earth, the choicest model of the artist, and now suddenly prostrate, concluding its career by exhibiting immortality to death. His revenge looked safe in the indifference of that new aspect! Or was it the expression imposed by a since penitent soul, whose last will on earth had been to proceed, in spite of death itself, as an agent of sin? If penitent, it was too late; the corpse would rise again in thirst for another's blood, and in that state the soul must rejoin its tenement, accountable for all consequences of its evil will thenceforward up to the day of doom. Such is the legacy the dead leave themselves; their spiritual lot to look down upon the ever-increasing tide of their own wickedness, as it rolls on beneath them, through many souls, at last through a living ocean, when it is too late to control its impulse. Piombino, already joined in the secret with the physician and me, shed his tears and wrung his hands over the pale body, whose beauty appeared to have come back to the face, as if to dwell yet for a longer time with it than hitherto.

Orazio set his cold eyes on the bier as he passed, but his lips had whitened, while his frown was that of the conscience-stricken impenitent, whose vengeance seemed to return with the life-like beauty of the dead; and thus my purpose so far was accomplished. When all else had moved by, it was the brigand's turn; but, standing firm, he silently but stoutly refused to pass and do homage, while his followers supported him, by taking upon themselves a like attitude of defiance, each throwing his left foot forward, and raising his head; the eyes of some on the roof, of others on the wall or pavement, while each man's hand was upon his weapon. Meantime the priests, entering in gaudy procession, were chanting as follows:—

Laid low is our dear brother now:
No eddying wrongs at his heart meeting.
Death's beauty sleeps upon his brow,
Without a dream its Maker greeting.

The past in lines of peace is writ
On that cold tablet of his spirit.
No sin upon the dead can sit:
The tomb can but the clay inherit.

Vengeance is His, ye sons of dust!
Touch not its rod, for Mercy wields it:
In Him, ye faithful, put your trust,
Aim not at life, for Justice shields it.

Vengeance is His, ye sons of clay!
Touch not its rod, all wrath subsideth;
His anger is not of a day,
God's time all chastisement abideth.

Prostrate at last are all who live:
The faithful take their wrongs to heaven;
It is their license to forgive:
But are the wicked thence forgiven?

The soul knows all her destiny,
When in the past she reads the morrow;
Thus sin, which lived to only die,
Descends the gulf of ancient sorrow.

This hymn, distinctly sung, had an elevating effect, and high mass proceeded in the usual manner. The ceremony of the church being over, dinner succeeded; it was served on the shady side of the sunlit court, and the party, together with the priests, sat down. Orazio, almost before our repast was over, left the table with looks of scorn, and, on the plea of joining in the civil war which had begun to rage, quitted the castle for the capital, taking his wife with him. The musicians played at intervals the most cheering tunes, and made the scene appear one of rejoicing; and thus the brigands found their recent hospitality to me returned. Scoronconcolo had been prevailed on to bring his band to the castle, depending on my word for his safety, and expecting a reward. But the event of this visit proved foreign to his taste. Having dined, we sat long afterwards under the shade, drinking freely of cool potations, for the afternoon was sultry, though a breeze stirred. In view was the old chapel, its door open, its window of yellow panes, on which there were painted saints, seen within through the portal. My eyes travelled thither for rest, and lingered about the holy place; a hanging reverie upon them, a sort of thoughtful halo which had got outside the mind, as if in meditation purposing to inspect the dried-up bed where tears had not lately flooded. In this mood, I saw the green, bright foliage which had clung about the arch of the chapel doorway, heard its low rustling; and it seemed almost to cease when observed, as if its sound had secrets to convey into the house of prayer; and then it would repeat itself with a deeper agitation, as though unable to maintain long silence on the passing events. The leaves, whose brisk doings thus moved my wondering spirit, even as the moon had recently done before the marriage, were of ivy, which was pendant between the glare outside and the subdued light of the little interior, where the body of Moro remained on its bier. But there was something in those shaking leaves to be observed and listened to, and I was led to think of the unburied—not visible at that distance, but to my consciousness the seeming source of nature's most peculiar quiet. The trickling noise of the leaves went on and off—their subdued sound stirring my fancy with an eloquence of its own, which seemed to whisper busily across the body to the saints upon the windows, as if descanting on the mysteries of man's death and resurrection. Such was my idea, and I advanced, that I might be nearer to those serious discoursings. I

descended into the chapel; at the farthest left there was a recess principally occupied by a monumental effigy. My eyes caught sight of crumbling pictures on the walls, and armour, then of the monument in the recess, which was inured to death's century-long lucubrations; but they were soon on the corpse, self-representative of a freshly-winged spirit. As I looked on the countenance, and at the last rays the sun would yield it through those dim panes—giving it an aspect of immortality—the leaves spoke again, while the body lay as a mute listener to the straggling words which came to it thence, from this natural world, as if to be with it to the very last, preaching of faith and life to come.

I had not the spirit to entertain my party, nor to observe the guests, who one by one disappeared, as the dead had done, without being missed, and all at once I found myself alone; but not long so, for the image of Giuditta came back to me, and returned with me into my empty dwelling. At midnight I saw the tomb closed upon its new tenant, and the banner was left to float over the not-inglorious memory of Moro.

I had engaged the affections of Giuditta and not loved her, so her image only was to be wedded to me: and it remained with me, its looks of goodness depressing me into depths of remorse, which, as part of our eternal being, are commonly left to spread about us hereafter if in woe, or to be otherwise ever hidden from our knowledge. So intricate became the entanglements round about me of each regretful remembrance, that, as in a cage—the soul's last prison—I lived in reverie rather than in actual life, avoiding all intercourse with others.

News came at last—as if to break in upon my solitary condition—that Volterra was in a state of siege. The intelligence roused me, and ere long the sound of arms rang through the castle. The city was in the hands of the republicans, and fresh troops were on their route there. A rebellion had burst out in support of the Medici, the object of its leaders being to shake off the yoke of the Gonfalonieri, and espouse that of Clement, a cause in which I was only too ready, on many accounts, to enlist.

Summoned to the contest by the city rendered sacred to me by family associations, I gladly collected my retainers, and plunged into the scene of action.

The citadel had remained in the hands of the republicans; but, notwithstanding a disadvantage thus formidable, I galloped up the steep, followed by my troop, and we made our way into the city without serious opposition. The arrival of fresh succours gave encouragement to the populace, which they stood in need of, a large number of the insurgents having already perished. Our arrival was a signal to the mass to rally once more, and we were shortly joined by several of the nobility. Preparations for a new fight became general; and such was the impetuosity of the mob, they were no sooner collected, than, with shouts and songs, they made a rush upon the fortress, and, to their own astonishment, drove numbers of the foe down the steep with irresistible force; and not even content with this advantage, they pursued them to the foot of the mountain, and put not a few to death, and as many more to flight.

When this achievement became known to the government, Ferruci was despatched to the contest, aided by a detachment under Giugni, who had to fight his way to the scene of action, and, but for the assistance of

Ferruci, would have been defeated in a battle fought with us across the Pesa. Every effort, meantime, was made by the inhabitants of Volterra to fortify their city, and guard it; but the struggle, once recommenced, was of brief duration; for the fortress was still held by the Florentines. The nobles, however, and others possessed of spirit, were, for the sake of their honour, indisposed to yield the day without a fresh trial of strength, and it fell to my lot to assume the command on that day. All that we could propose to ourselves was to keep the heights at the moment of the enemy's approach, and hurl huge stones, or whatever else was at hand, upon the invaders. To enable us to pursue this plan of warfare, it was necessary to separate our force, that one division of it might oppose itself to the fortress, while the other kept in check the ascending column of the enemy. And so easy is it when men are earnest to engage even against greater numbers, it was at one time hoped that victory might be declared in our favour. The fortress actually fell into our hands, and many within its walls were put to the sword. But after several hours of hard fighting Ferruci recaptured the city, and those who escaped rushed to the defence of their homes. Thus beaten, the leaders of the insurrection were glad to accompany me to my castle. Once there, attack was improbable, so depressed was the condition of republican affairs; nor, in case of need, would a lengthened resistance on our part have been otherwise than easy to maintain.

Thanatos, with fifty others, had followed me in the expedition, but he disappeared on the second day. As our people approached the castle, on our retreat, their numbers not greatly diminished, and all in high spirits at the gallant part they had sustained, the evening suddenly closed in. Our journey, together with all thought of pursuit, at an end, we allowed our horses to walk quietly up the avenue. I, perhaps more exhausted than the rest, lagged behind. I was in thought; that deep thought which, like the depths of the waters, is immovable, and without an object. Thus sombre and vacant, I was brought back to reality by two blows being dealt upon me simultaneously. I fell from my charger with a groan, the eyes of Thanatos and Orazio Pallavicini floating in the haze of my vision.

My people heard me. Some made pursuit of the assassins; others, horror-stricken, raised me in their arms and bore me to the castle. I was placed upon my bed half insensible; the blood gushed out from my body, and, as life ebbed, the spirit itself seemed to rise like a gigantic flood which was about to overflow space. To its side came the forms of heroes—the priestly warriors of my line—the antique smile upon their features expressive of approval; my danger unobserved by them, and of no account; my act in favour of Volterra a consolation to the dead of old.

I was giddy as one who, with mental vision, saw worlds revolve as he drew nearer to them on his passage hence. I tossed myself about with alternating wavings of the arm,—like the wounded who salutes death on the field of battle. The drug was administered, and these inward watchings were converted into the strange sleep of science, in which the soul gets up from the body and walks about this world, conscious of gigantic powers. Horsed and plumed, I rode with well-poised lance, as on the air. Under commands issued by my glance, polygonal blocks were

snatched from walls, and flung around like hailstones. The foe rolled like light clouds down the steep into the valley, and disappeared like buried shadows under the sward of the meadows.

I sat long upon my saddle, my eyes transfixing reflection, my thoughts in the bottomless present, like stars seen within a well by day; and calm, as if amid those twilights which hover between the living and the dead. Then came a murmur of waters to my ear, and a burning thirst choked my throat. A cool stream burst upwards across my immovable sight; the spray fell; but my lips had lost their will. Who was it that knew how I desired to bend to the fountain?

My eyes unclosed upon a Sister of Mercy as she touched my mouth with a cup of water. I saw my attendant with a sigh, and took her soul to mine; drew her into my inward being as my eyes closed again. It was Giuditta; and the sight of the forgiving one was sadness, yet peace. I then slept like the adamant: self-forgotten was I as my infancy; blank as the immediate retrospect of the few who have risen from the dead.

And she nursed me tenderly for weeks. My gratitude, as is ever the case in these circumstances, grew warmer daily, and soon melted into distressing and unendurable affection. It was love; the inevitable result of care from the hand of beauty during illness! In the chamber of the sick every grace soon lets drop its mask: the labour of duty, the fortitude already over-wrought, these cannot bear to be further taxed, not even in concealment of goodness itself, so modest at other times as to need a garment: but truth unconstrained is left visible as after years of affection. All would be loved by all, as by one, but for this veil so rarely torn!

"I must not hear you," she would say, in answer to my selfish protestations; "be not self-deceived again. You have not yet known love: you cannot mislead one who has. Your yearnings for Melissa were due to another as yet unseen; to one who, once seen, all doubt must vanish: for the means of real bliss brings faith with it to the believer. I know all; dreams are vouchsafed to the earnest,—dreams which come to pass. Despair not; divine love, such as is in reserve for you, does not, cannot despair. I love you as you may one day love: I despair not, but am full of hope! My hope is eternal—for you!

"Such is love; as yet you have not known it. Twice now you have despaired; not once loved!"

The din of arms sounded again under the walls of Volterra; once more I was in the thick of the fight. I faced the intrepid Ferruci and hoped—it was at the sight of his lofty stature and fiery eye—hoped to meet the vain-glorious death. But like death his pallid looks met mine, and he glided away. I rushed to the breach; there shone the helmet of Ferruci: I was repulsed with my comrades. I then sought death at the other breach; Ferruci was there.

Against the vigilance of this man we could effect nothing. He was everywhere, cheering his men by eloquence and example. As often as we appeared at the breach we were repulsed; and when at length Ferruci was wounded, and forced to retire, the victory was ours. But he reappeared, and we were driven down the precipice amid showers of stones, and boiling oil in torrents. Horrible was the slaughter, and both armies were alike infected by the death-like silence of the slain.

I remained a week on the field, attended by my page Mezzofonte; not

wounded, but exhausted. After this interval the siege was renewed with batteries. At the first discharge sixty feet of the ramparts fell! I arose, and with others rushed to the assault; but before us stood Ferruci once more. He was now a walking fever, a gaunt effigy of wounds; but his lips and soul gave courage to the downcast. As fast as we clambered up the precipice we were dashed back by all kinds of missiles, among them spiked planks and loose barrels of stones, which carried havoc and destruction about their path. Maddened by each other's vengeful shouts and eager, blood-shot looks, we returned to the conquest, led on by the brave Spaniard Diego Sarmiento, whose tall figure and white plume soared conspicuously; and this time we planted four banners on the walls.

And now came the close encounter; the thrust was made at random by strengthless men; the sound of artillery died away heavily; and while the stab was unfelt, glory and death rolled together into one dream.

The banners had been torn down, and all their bearers, save myself, had perished. One dagger only was directed at me; but ere the point reached, the guilty Orazio rolled at my feet, cut down by a blow from Mezzofonte. The next moment Thanatos was visible; but on seeing Orazio down, and my eyes fastened on himself, he fled like a shadow.

The struggle was over; the victory was with Ferruci.

Weeks elapsed, and the fever of that day still raged within me. When reason at length shone, and I looked about, and inquired where it was I lay, it was she who answered me—Giuditta! Yes, she had found me out among the thousands of living and dead. I was at Volterra. When I asked whose guest I had been, the immortal Ferruci was at my side!

Giuditta had nursed me again through my danger in compliance with a meek conscience; and had departed contented with her work when my life was safe. How can I, who am so base a being, relate the full history of her devotion? In a few words let me tell what occurred. She had followed me to the walls, penetrated the foe in her dress of Mercy, obtained an interview of Ferruci on the eve of battle, and revealed to him that her broken-hearted Prince of Valanidi hoped to put an end to his troubles in the approaching conflict.

The hero needed no further parley, but spared my life as often as it was threatened; which was rarely but in his presence, for both of us were ever foremost in the fight. It was he, too, who truly saved my well-loved city from rapine and plunder; for had he not been invincible, it must have shared all the crowning atrocities of war at the hands of the invaders. Alas, his race of glory had already nearly run! So great a name, acquired in so short a time, is destined to be one of the marvels of history; and therefore was his career cut short at the hour in which he saw the liberty of his country blotted out from the globe.

THE DUSTY PHILOSOPHER; OR, A STAGE-COACH BIOGRAPHY.

BEING THE THIRD CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

I am not unattended—
You heard the thunder roll above my head,
My fate will lead me. Fear not, I shall reach
Th' appointed goal without my seeking it.
Schiller.

"Hillo! hold hard!" exclaimed a voice, proceeding from the dense clouds of dust which the Rover well-appointed four-horse coach had, in going its favourite pace on a broiling day in July, raised around it from the white glistening turnpike-road, which conducts man and horse from W—— to B——, and which that deuce of a fellow to "bowl them along," as he calls it, the coachman of the said Rover, declares to be the "best bit o' ground in all England."

"Wo!" cried our driver, with a voice resembling the lowest note on a violoncello, at the same time pulling his wheelers back on their haunches; and, as the Rover came to a stand-still, the owner of the voice who had summoned us to stop emerged from the dust, which had at first hid him from view.

"There's room behind!" exclaimed our whip, as he eyed the candidate for place, whose seedy suit, and battered-looking hat, rendered none the better in appearance for the dust with which they were covered, indicated something akin to poverty on the part of their possessor. "There's room behind! How far are ye going?"

"There's room in front also, my nonpareil," replied the new comer, gaily, with a smile on his worn, yet not unprepossessing countenance; and without noticing the question which had been put to him, showing considerable agility he mounted the coach, and with a polite "Permit me, sir," as he passed, took his seat beside me, placing a small bundle at his feet, which, suspended from a stick, he had been carrying over his shoulder. Wiping his perspiring forehead with an old silk handkerchief, whose tattered state appeared, like its owner, to speak of other days, the new comer, addressing the coachman, exclaimed,

"Proceed, old buffalo; and, if your cattle like it, go the pace again."

The genius of the Rover, or, in other words, our coachman, turned his eyes over his shoulder at the speaker, with something like astonishment depicted in their expression, and as though he were about to make a reply; but with a slight grunt he turned again on his seat, intent only on "keeping 'em together," and away once more went the chestnut and three bays, as the whip, in the height of his admiration, if asked the question, would have said, "like birds."

"Sancho, Sancho!" cried the dusty stranger, standing up as the Rover again moved on, the call being addressed to a four-footed companion, which, with a joyful bark responsive to his master's voice, announced

himself as all right, and sagacious as the prototype of his name, keeping ahead of the dust, in the front of the Rover.

"Good dog! good dog!" ejaculated he of the bundle, resuming his seat, and turning a glance upon me after a moment's pause, during which he had recourse again to his tattered bandana, whilst, by the expression of his countenance, evidently speculating on my physiognomy, he thus addressed me:

"Beautiful country this, sir,—well wooded, hill and dale,—very beautiful! Seen it though, probably, before? Ah! sir, is it not a pity, ten thousand pities, a treat lost, to pass through it on such a broiling day, when the poor leaves look choking with thirst, and all nature seems to cry 'down with the dust.'"

With a smile, at the oddity of the speaker's remarks, I replied,

"It was a pity."

"Ah!" he resumed, seemingly pleased with the response which I had made to his overture for conversation, "how much they lose who know not, feel not the beauty of the country! A man, sir, who can pass his days hemmed in by bricks and mortar, and never sigh for the green fields and the laughing streams, is unfitted for the seventh heaven; when he shuffles off this mortal coil, his soul should die with him, nor be allowed to wing its flight to the realms of immortality."

The dusty traveller paused, and looked at me inquiringly, as though expecting me to assent to the opinion which he had expressed.

"A poor and enthusiastic poet," I mentally ejaculated, and observed in reply, "that there was much to be said on both sides, town and country."

"True, sir, true," he returned, speaking rapidly, and with much animation; "town with its gaiety, country its solitude: the last opera—the new waltz—the glittering hall—the brilliant throng—the syren's song—the inspiring dance. Country: the incense-breathing morn—the fields—the flowers—the soaring lark—the mountain bee—the shadowy landscape—the sombre woods—the hooting owl. Fair contrasts these, and for which shall we decide? Light heart country—heavy heart town. Yes, it must be so; humanity has an universal tendency to gloom; so, taking all in all, why town for me. Yes, the hurly-burly, the glitter, the whirl, the din, have more of cheer for the worn heart than the country—the still—the lovely—the peaceful—the beautiful."

The owner of the bundle uttered the last few words slowly, and with a subdued voice, and, when he had ceased speaking, his tattered handkerchief again came forth to wipe his forehead and his eyes together.

"A broken player!" I now mentally exclaimed; and drawing forth my cigar-case I invited him to smoke with me.

"Thank you," he replied, in a tone of voice which had changed again to cheerfulness, even gaiety, "I am already armed, as you may see," drawing, as he spoke, from his coat pocket, a short black pipe, "and carry also good store of munition in that best of leaves the Yarra, but I will not decline your offer. No, no; my pipe I like well enough—Sancho and it are my dearest companions; but a cigar is an agreeable change, which my exchequer don't often sanction, and so I'll accept your offer, and thank you. Ah, sir," he continued, after courteously first passing to me the light which he had struck, "let me not suffer so far in your estimation as to suppose that I wish to make a return for your gift in 'soft

sawder,' when I tell you that I think you are of the right kidney, and that if there were more of your sort in the great cast of the play of life, the business would go much more smoothly on. Pardon me one moment," continued the stranger, seeing I was about to speak, "what I mean is this, that nine out of every ten possessing better suits than this Mantuan apothecary-like lot of mine, would, thus meeting, turn up their noses at me, as though perforce I must be a cracksman, or there be contagion in my very looks; forgetting it might be just possible that they were judging unjustly, as well as neglecting an opportunity of doing good at a cheap cost, which would be the case, by cheering up a perhaps desponding heart, whose path had been cast in rough places, and whose real deserts, mayhap, might be much nearer pity than contempt. Besides," continued the stranger, after a short pause, "companionship, however humble, must tend to lessen the tediousness of a long journey. Were I one of the wealthiest men in England, my carriage and the postchaise should be at times dispensed with for the stage-coach, when I would invite rather than shun conversation with the passengers whom chance might cast in my way, and find therein amusement, even though I should, as it is told of a learned doctor similarly influenced, have to try some of them on no higher theme than that of leather."

I could not refrain from a smile, or from observing to my loquacious companion that I fully agreed with him in the view he took of the subject; "and yet," I added, "much should be allowed on the score of the reserve of English character."

"Oh, no, no," returned he of the bundle, with a bitter smile, "that in my case would not apply. Pride, sir, pride and suspicion—the pride of the new against the old coat, and the suspicion that the old coat, if made familiar with, might perchance want a favour of the new. And yet I know human nature well enough to declare, that there are many poor bankrupts in fortune like myself, who never did, and who never will, sacrifice their spirit of independence, and who retain untarnished their self-pride amidst all their trials. There are hundreds like myself, sir, in the low ranks of the battle of life who, though very poor, are yet very proud, who possess the true nobility of spirit, and to whom the offer of charity would be insult. I have myself been even lower in the scale than you now behold me—almost

> As one who stands upon a rock
> Environed with a wilderness of sea,
> Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,
> Expecting ever when some envious surge
> Will in its brinish bowels swallow him.

Yes, sir, I have been at times almost on the brink of despair, but never yet have I begged favour of a human soul, or sacrificed one jot of my self-respect and independence of spirit; and, as long as poverty shall be no crime, I can be proud even in rags, ay, and afford to smile, too, at the pride of the world."

A flash of colour suffused the hitherto pale cheeks of the speaker, and I could not be otherwise than struck with the general expression of self-reliance which his features bore.

Becoming interested in the stranger, I encouraged him to further conversation, in the course of which I found that my surmise was correct—he was a player—and had in his time played many parts indeed.

"I have starred it," he observed, in a tone of jocularity, "as *Shylock* and as *Richard*, and have gone on also as *Salanio* and the first murderer."

He of the bundle had, indeed, seen something of the world, and experienced many trials, inculcating, however, a very useful philosophy therefrom, with "which, whilst he had health and strength," he said, "he could get on merrily enough, and would snap his fingers at all blue devils;" and again quoting his favourite bard whilst addressing me, the dusty philosopher exclaimed,

> "I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
> A stage, where every man must play a part."

Soon after our discussion of this subject, the Rover pulled up at a road-side inn, where, after the horses had been watered, the coachman brandy-and-watered, and he of the bundle and myself "home-brewed," not forgetting the four-footed friend of my companion, who came for and received a most affectionate caress from his master, we resumed our journey, and the dusty philosopher and myself our conversation.

"My history," said he, soon afterwards, in allusion to an observation which I had made on the subject, "has nothing in it particularly remarkable, and yet it may amuse you. Listen, and I will give you an account of my harum-scarum and, alas! worse than unprofitable career. You will excuse my prefacing the narrative with a quotation, the beauty of which all must admire, the truth too many—alas! I for one—have experienced:—

> As we do turn our backs
> From our companion thrown into his grave,
> So his familiars to his buried fortunes
> Slink all away, leave their false vows with him,
> Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,
> A dedicated beggar to the air,
> With his disease of all shunn'd poverty,
> Walks, like contempt, alone."

The tones of the stranger's voice were full of music, and the reading was given most exquisitely. I was free in my encomiums, and begged him to proceed. With a smile, indicating that my appreciation of his perfect elocution had gratified him, he continued:—"A few miles further on I shall leave the coach for a small village which lies near, and the tower of whose church is visible from the road. In the outskirts of that village I was born. For some years I have not visited the place, and after to-morrow—

> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty space from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusky death.

After to-morrow's sojourn amid the scenes of my boyhood, I quit it, and for ever. Were you, sir, acquainted with the geography of the place, I would call to your remembrance a farm, known as the Grange, situated in one of the loveliest of spots of this loveliest of counties. The dwelling stands in a valley, shut in on one side by undulating slopes of richly-cultivated upland; on the other by a far-spreading wood, at whose base, in the quiet of a summer's evening, a brawling brook is heard, rivalling with its music the blackbird's song. Looking from the valley, cresting the cultured upland, a venerable ruin presents itself to the gaze.

and with its last lone tower and rugged outline of mouldering walls, pictured on the background of a sunset sky, might seem to the eye of imagination the fallen bulwark of a happy valley. Here I was born. Here passed a calm, if not a happy boyhood. I had but one brother, and he, as was his father before him, became a farmer. My father had relatives in London, who occasionally visited us at the Grange. I had ever an inclination and longing for more bustling scenes than our country life afforded, and to gratify my wish—the facilities being afforded through my father's connexions—I was placed in a large mercantile house in London soon after I had completed my fifteenth year. I have not time, nor, indeed, would I weary you with the particulars of my progress to manhood. I had plenty of money; for, as well as a liberal allowance from my father, my mother's purse was ever open to me, and I drew from it to an extent that only a mother could allow, and only could a mother believe such pleas as I made to justify the unsparing plunder. The life of a young fellow in London, with means and the inclination to indulge himself, need not be repeated; 'tis, indeed, a thrice-told tale, and I know not that my career presents any marked difference to that of hundreds of others, who have before me, and who are now, hurrying along the tide to ruin. During the time of my engagement with the house in which I had been placed to acquire a knowledge of business, it was not so much the money expended as the habits which I had contracted, that rendered it so eventful a period of my life. When the term had expired, I found myself free; and with the natural tact which I possessed, and general business acquirements, I might, with application, have been, having capital left me at the time, now a London merchant, instead of a broken strolling player. But application I had not; on the contrary, business became distasteful to me; and the only atmosphere that seemed congenial to my soul was that of scenes of excitement, no matter what their character.

"The capital which I found myself in possession of at that critical period in my career, became mine through the death of my father. I returned to town, after attending his funeral, with the promises made to him, of attending to his solemn advice, fresh on my lips—promises, alas! soon forgotten, and with ample means I commenced the fool's career. 'Tis past, 'tis gone. In the midst of my life of extravagance and insensate folly, I was for a brief period checked by the intelligence of my mother's death; all that she had to leave was left to me, and—mother-like to the last—she attributed the course of life which I was pursuing, not to the tendency of my own disposition, but to the Philistines into whose hands I had fallen, and I was, of course, to the last by her regarded as her dear, unfortunate boy. My brother continued the farm for some years, and married; but unfortunately for his matrimonial speculation, his better half proved to be a drunkard. He quitted the farm, converted his effects into cash, and, making an allowance for his first love, left the country. And thus of my family I was the last. Ah! sir, what I might have done with the means once mine is for me now bitterly to remember; what I have done, tell thou the tale my very seedy suit! That I have played many parts, I have already intimated; but little did I deem, when for my amusement in town I joined a party of amateurs, that a future day would witness my histrionic displays to get me bread. That I have sounded the sea of humanity with the plummet of poverty, you

will readily imagine. As long as my cash lasted, 'twas of course with me, as it ever was and ever will be whilst man is man, whilst L. S. D. shall prove more powerful than friendship. Talk of Aladdin's lamp, or Prospero's wand,—give me the talisman of L. S. D.! It will effect more than the open sesame of the eastern story, or the power of Ariel's master, Milan's duke; for L. S. D. can open the way into hearts, and win affection, friendship, love—everything in this sublunary sphere. I had shoals of friends; my cash gone—they vanished. 'Twas ever so, 'twould be contrary to human nature to expect otherwise. Did I anticipate aught different? not I!—and only mention it to show what very muck-worms we are with all our boasted attributes. I have been, indeed, a fool and a spendthrift; but yet have I the consolation, poor though it be, in the retrospect of the past, that I am alone the sufferer by my folly. How many are there regarded with an eye of commiseration in their ruin, whose career, under the semblance of random thoughtlessness, has been a career of intense selfishness,—indulging in enjoyments with means not their own, but which have been, perhaps, hardly earned by bitter sacrifices on the parts of others,—a career which has also its pseudo halo of generosity, where the good-hearted fellow wins his title by being generous without being just,—earning with the substances of others a false fame for kindness and liberality. Such was not the case with me. Such I have happily not to reproach myself with. And so, sir, in me you behold a broken man—broken in pocket, but not in spirit; no, no! for I have yet hope, sweet hope,

That kings makes gods, and meaner creatures kings!

Wearied of my itinerant career,—now lecturing, now playing,—I have resolved upon changing the scene,—have chosen Australia; and a week hence I shall be on my way to that so-called 'happy land.' Even should I not succeed in obtaining anything better, I understand that as a shepherd I am certain of employment. The stage of life is at best but a chapter of chances, and I shall quit my native shores with a happy-go-lucky sort of prospect before me,—not too hoping, nor too desponding; so that neither success nor failure shall surprise me!"

"Your misfortunes," I observed, when he had come to an end, "have certainly not taken all the steel out of you; is there not, therefore, a field for you in your own country? Why not make an essay at fortune here, instead of at the Antipodes?"

"Ah! sir," replied my battered-looking companion, after a short pause, "that is impossible; besides my own, there is no occupation here I could follow; for air, the free air of heaven, I must have, and liberty, the vagabond's liberty, if nothing better, but still liberty must be mine. Were you to see a specimen of my caligraphy, an excellent hand you would pronounce it, and worthy of a clerkship—but that is impossible. 'Day-book and ledger, avaunt! with your concomitants of close atmosphere and brick walls, whilst the hedges are clothed with green, whilst streams are laughing in the meadows, and birds are on the wing.' As well be immured in Chillon's lowest vault. Sweet freedom—if it be only in the streets—but freedom must be mine. Besides, to tell you the truth," continued the dusty traveller, after pausing to relight his cigar, which had gone out during his last rhapsody, "I am weak enough to indulge in a vague sort of belief that my fortune, by gipsy told, is about to be

verified, and that my going abroad is a part and parcel of the fickle dame's dispensation that is to be. You smile—but listen; 'brief let me be; the glow-worm shows the matin to be near,' or, in other words, I perceive by the milestone we have just passed that I shall soon have to leave you.

"When I was but a lad, on my father's farm there regularly encamped a party of gipsies. Just before I left home to enter upon the world, I was out one day shooting with a neighbour's son, a rude unlettered boor of a fellow, who had about as much feeling as his gun-stock. After some indifferent success in shooting small birds, as we passed the gipsy tent, a little ragged urchin came forth, and, accosting my companion, begged he would give him a bird for his dinner. He refused; and with a brutal remark to the bright-eyed though dirty little fellow, threatened to knock him down, if he did not instantly decamp. Indeed, he made such a show of carrying out his threat, as quite to frighten the child, for he was little better. I reproved him for his unmerited harshness; and, emptying my own pockets of the feathered spoil, gave them to the gipsy youngster. It appeared that the mother of the child had been watching us from the tent, and had overheard what had passed; for, as I turned away to follow my companion, I was arrested by the sound of her voice calling after me. She advanced close to me, and a finer specimen of the dark-eyed tribe I never beheld. With some remarks about my treatment of the boy, as compared with my companion, in which I was of course infinitely the gainer, she followed them up by requesting that I would allow her to inspect the palm of my hand.

"'Nonsense, I replied; your lad is welcome to the birds: I don't require payment for them by your telling my fortune. No, no, my good woman; excuse me, I have no faith in it; 'tis well enough for the lasses.'

"'I will not detain you a minute, young man,' she returned, with what I regarded at the time as an affected earnestness of manner; and taking my hand, which I did not attempt to withhold, she cast a hurried look over the palm, let it drop, and then turning her fine dark eyes upon me, full of friendly expression, exclaimed,

"'I wished it might have been better. You will have many trials, young man—you will have your pleasures, but pains will follow. Your heart will prove warmer than your head will prove strong; but this, mark, keep ever a good spirit. Your open hand shall be too open; but there is a rich wife for you, who will love you; and you shall find her in a foreign land, and be happy. You do not believe all this; but you shall find it come true.'

"How very ridiculous I then thought her prophecy, it is needless to say. As to quitting the country, it was the most unlikely of all her foretelling, as I never had entertained the most remote desire to go abroad. But mark what follows. Some years afterwards, during a short visit which I was paying a friend in the country, I chanced one day to be purchasing a pair of gloves in a shop in the town near which my friend resided. Whilst the very polite shopkeeper was waiting upon me, a gipsy woman entered, bearing in her hand some torn piece of dirty looking cloth, which had, it seemed, served as a wrapper of goods which the shopkeeper had received, and which, after the removal of the contents, had been left on the pavement at his shop-door. Holding it before her, and so extending it as to

show the man of the counter that in its torn and dirty state it was all but worthless, she inquired of him how much she should give him for it. Whether the glove-vendor entertained an antipathy to the tribe in general, or whether he considered his domain desecrated by the *entrée* of this gipsy in particular, I know not, but in a fierce burst of passion he commanded her instantly to replace the article from whence she had taken it, following up his command with an anathema against her race in general, as robbers and vagabonds all, that hanging was by far too good for.

"I saw nothing that the poor woman had done to justify the irate trader in his remarks, and whilst paying him for the gloves I had selected, remonstrated with him on his unjust severity.

"'Take the rag with you,' said I, turning to the woman, whose retreat my remarks in her behalf had arrested in the doorway. 'Take the rag with you, and I will settle with this gentleman for it.'

"I told the shopkeeper to take what he considered a fair value for the article, and whilst receiving my change, could ill-disguise the contempt with which I regarded his attempt to extenuate the coarse and unfeeling attack which he had made on the poor woman, who, with a hurried acknowledgment to me of my gift, quitted the place.

"Returning with my friend from a fishing excursion on the following evening, I was accosted by the same woman. When I tell you that she was voluble in her thanks, you will be prepared to hear also, that, as a slight token of her gratitude, she proffered to tell my fortune. Singular, too, that very day I had been relating to my friend the circumstance which I have just related to you of the first insight which I had received into my future, through a gipsy tale, and now, more to gratify his whim than my own, I stepped aside and held out my hand to the fortune-teller. You will smile when I assure you that she read the lines exactly as they had been read some ten years before. You may imagine that the seer was the same in both instances, and had it been so, there would of course have been nothing remarkable about it, but such was not the case; the gipsy who had now drawn the curtain of my fate was apparently about my own age—the one who had read my future when a boy was then old enough to be my mother. I should add, moreover, that the tribe to which the fortune-teller I am now mentioning belonged, had never migrated so far south as this county by a hundred miles, and the same people had regularly appeared in the quarter where my friend resided, since he could recollect, from his boyhood.

"And what was my impression after this second revelation you will naturally inquire?

"'All stuff, sheer stuff, sir; leave the country, never,' I exclaimed to my friend; 'had they wished me to believe, they should have hit upon some other more likely possibility.'

"And yet, as my friend remarked, it was not a little singular that at such a distance of time and place my future should have been read the same. What follows, however, makes it little short of wonderful!

"A few years since, and just as I was approaching the termination of my spendthrift do-nothing career, consequent upon my funds showing symptoms of exhaustion, I was passing over Norwood, with two companions who had, with me, been partaking of a champagne lunch at a mutual friend's in the neighbourhood, when we were accosted by one of the gipsy tribe, whose object was, of couse, to tell our future. I should here

observe, that the dark-eyed oracles already mentioned both displayed in features the most favourable characteristics of their tribe, whilst the one who now approached us was, though still young, singularly unprepossessing. She was very importunate, and seemed determined, if possible, not to be shaken off. We were all very merry, and much more disposed to be generous than cross with the fortune-teller. After bantering her on her supposed powers of divination, one of our party, to test her ingenuity, offered to pay for our three fates being revealed, on condition that she should tell them in succession, and that we should stand together whilst the revelations were made. To this the weird sister at first objected, but seeing her chance of succeeding in her object on any other terms was hopeless, at last consented, and began her task. We stood together, and showed but little gravity, as you may suppose, whilst the dark-eyed sister mumbled out the first fortune. Mine came the last, and, not to be too prolix, the Norwood gipsy repeated almost word for word all that the others had foretold. There was this remarkable difference: of my spendthrift folly she spoke as the past—the others had, alas! too truly told it of my future. Was it not strange? Can you wonder that I began to ponder deeply on the prophecy, and that I began to believe there might be something in it! And yet, even then, quitting my native land was the last thing in my thoughts. Gloomy as my prospects were at the time, I was more inclined to trust to a vague, undefined sort of future, wherein something advantageous might transpire, rather than to contemplate any definite course of action, least of all emigration. But the subsequent events of my chequered career have, indeed, given a colour to the prediction—fallen as I am, it is not surprising that I am now willing and disposed to believe what I had before treated as unworthy of a thought, and feel that, almost in spite of myself, my fate leads me 'over the waters of the dark blue sea.'

"See yon straggling-looking old building to the right in the hollow to which we are advancing," exclaimed my companion, suddenly changing the subject, and pointing out to me the object which a turn in the road had, together with an enchanting prospect, brought into view. "There the road branches off to the village I spoke of—there I shall leave you."

"How endearing! Oh, how touchingly beautiful to me is this well-remembered scene."

The player, with these words, ceased speaking. We were both silent for some moments gazing on the lovely expanse of pastoral valley which was spread before us, and when I turned again to address him, I observed a big round tear fall from the eye, and remain untouched on the dusty cheek of my fellow-traveller. I made some remark on the beauty of the picture we were contemplating; but he of the bundle was silent, and when, after a long pause, he again spoke, it was more as though he were giving utterance to his thoughts than addressing his language to me.

"Yes, one night more will I pass in the old house; once more ramble over the old haunts, and then a long—a last farewell."

"'Tis but a melancholy pleasure you are picturing to yourself," I observed, when he again became silent; "such I should have deemed you would rather have avoided than sought, so cheerful, so philosophical as I had thought you."

"Ah, but what a contradiction is man," he replied, with a smile; "I shall leave the country all the better for passing a few hours in farewell

with the scenes of my childhood. Moreover, I have a strong desire to pass one night where I shall in fancy see my mother once again leaning over my pillow; feel once more her kiss on my cheek—the room of my boyhood's sleep, my boyhood's dreams. To the present tenant of the farm I shall be not altogether a stranger. My father's name is, I am sure, not utterly forgotten in the place, and I am tolerably confident that there is not a dwelling in the village where I shall not meet the kindest hospitality, though seeming, what in truth I am, a dusty vagabond."

We were fast nearing the point indicated by the poor philosopher to the coachman as the spot where he wished to alight, and whilst he was adjusting his bundle on his stick, I thanked him for the relation he had given me, and expressed, in wishing him good-bye, how much satisfaction it would have afforded me, to have had his companionship still longer, and that I most sincerely wished him success in his new undertaking.

"Thanks, many thanks," he returned, whilst taking the hand which I proffered him. "I appreciate your sympathy; 'tis like gently falling dew to one's heart. I have read you the principal chapters from my book of life, and have only to regret 'tis an o'er true tale. But never say die. My colours I've nailed to the mast, and whilst there's a rag flying will stick to the craft. Good-bye! one more shake of your hand, and take with you my best wishes—a poor player's blessing!"

"All right, my pippin!" he exclaimed, addressing the coachman, as he reached the ground, with an attempt at gaiety in the tones of his voice. "Let them go."

And away again we went, leaving the dusty philosopher in the road waving his hand to me, until the Rover turned a bend in our course, and he was lost to view. Yet methinks I see him now, as I there last beheld him, with his dog Sancho at his feet, looking up in his face as though cogitating what would be the next step in the chequered and changing fortunes of his master.

RICHMOND.

A PASTORAL, IN PROSE.

By Mrs. White.

We sometimes wonder, in our city walks, if other passers-by are as sentient as ourselves to certain objects, whether the first-seen flowers of spring—"wan primroses"—wake up for them sweet visions of the woods, where these pale petals first disclosed themselves. Do they go forth in spirit to green lanes, where, furred about with moss, or daintily o'erlapped with loving leaves, the violet puts on her scented purple? Can the breath of hawthorn-boughs, fading, perchance, upon the sun-scorched flagging, waft them most magically to the margins of lisping brooks, the shady hedge-rows, and the outskirts of grassy mead-lands, where they grow? Will it shut out for them the noisy throng and crowded thoroughfare, displacing men and women with green trees, and spreading

forth a daisy-pied path upon some furlongs of the city pavement? Will it make fresh boughs shake and whisper overhead, and wake the cuckoo's note, now here, now there, as he plays hide-and-seek amongst the branches? Does it make visible pink clover-fields; and, with a gentle dissonance, the ringing of the whetstone on the scythe recal the warm-browed mower at his work? Will it image village children weaving daisy-chains; and sunburnt boys, round-faced as those that haunted old Silenus, "piping on oaten straws," as shepherds did in the young days of Shakspeare? Can it conjure, in exchange for shrilly cries, the rush of vehicles, and noisy barter, a choir of singing birds in some cool covert, the fife-like whistling of an orange-billed blackbird, the clear notes of the thrush, and that delicious, day-long anthem, the outpouring of the sky-lark's instrumental throat? Will these things do this transferring for other people, making the city as a solemn wood, and they the meditative wanderers in it? For us, so powerful are these flowery spells, floating us, as it were, upon their fragrance into the very midst of all these objects, that when the mental vision has passed by, there still remains such longings to be with them, that the sweet wish at length fulfils itself. Many a pleasant pilgrimage, many a summer's-day spent in the whiteness of pure thoughts and grateful communings with the fresh heart of nature, do we owe to such constrainings; and yet 'tis well if only dreamers are so acted on. What long days would those be in city offices if the poor clerk, in transferring from the flower-girl's basket a blossom to his coat-breast, dallied with thoughts like these. Must he lose "heartease" in wearing "*pensée;*" and, for love of a sweet-briar spray, have his desk haunted with Hamadryades? Suppose, too, if all were subject to such visitings, the especial sufferings of those gentlemen who, under the shade of tantalising boughs, have transacted business these months past.* There they stand, beneath "the emerald light of leaf-entangled beams," and yet no sign of "green and yellow melancholy," of "yearnings like the sailor's for the shore," attests the promptings of those leafy tempters. The breezy air that should whisper 'midst their branches, the odour of wild flowers at their feet, the chorus of the bees sipping and singing in their pendent blossoms (for they are lime-trees), sipping and singing, like the rejoicing hinds that Galen tell of, who, finding manna dropping from the forest, cried out for joy, that Jupiter rained honey! All these are wanting; and the close atmosphere, the glazed-out sky, and endless chink of gold upon the counters, might well induce conclusions dangerous to clerkly peace, and, by sheer force of contrast, occasion ceaseless dreams of sylvan places. But practical people are not dreamers; they take the great King Solomon's advice, and gather "the roses while they be blowing," without sighing for imaginary Bendimeers, or caring even to trace their whereabout to the odorous rosaries, or cottage gardens, whence they came. To us those trees would whisper all day long of aisle-like avenues and shady places, of chequered light and shade in breezy motion, paving the soft moss velvet at their feet; we should see cerulean clusters of germander blooming beside the wrinkled primrose-leaves, and hear the trolling of the honey-bee gauging the depths of their melliferous blossoms. It was surely some such voiceless

* The clerks in the Receiving-office at the Bank.

persuasions that induced us to pass a self-made holiday this summer amidst the classic shades, the natural loveliness, and literary associations of Richmond. We had the "Seasons" in recollection; Lady Mary Montague, fresh as a breeze, and pleasant as a sunbeam in our mind's eye; and the old sweet air, "The Lass of Richmond Hill," ringing in our imagination's ears; and these associates, and the pastoral scenery that accompanied us on both sides of the way, almost from Vauxhall to the end of our journey, made as charming a prelude as might be to the intended entertainment of the day. It was a fresh delicious morning—one of those mornings when the very act of respiration exhilirates us—a little clouded, but with glimpses of blue sky, showing like cautious promises, *hardly given*, only to surprise us with unexpected munificence by-and-by. We are epicures in our mental pleasures; and, though we longed to make the view from the hill our own, we reserved the *coup-d'œil* for the grand dish of our feast, and turned into the green to refresh our historical associations, by a peep at the ancient archway, the last remnant of a regal residence at Shene. "The palace," says Camden, "stood a little east of the bridge, and close by the river-side, and was chiefly used as a nursery for our princes and princesses." Some of them, however, were coffined here as well as cradled; and, during a portion of Mary's reign, it served as the prison-house of her sister Elizabeth. Very solemn, too, were the circumstances under which death made his visits to crowned heads at Shene—epics of history, they tell the touching moral of humanity stronger than state—of natural sorrow breaking down the artificial defences of rank, and forcing kings to find their level in affliction, like common clay upon the lap of Nature. Here Edward III. died of *grief*, for the loss of his warlike son; he of the chivalrous heart and sable armour, whose gauntlets and surcoat still moulder above his tomb in the cathedral at Canterbury. "Here also," to quote Camden again, "died the beautiful and *entirely beloved* Anne, queen of Richard II., daughter of the Emperor Charles IV., and sister to Wencislaus, King of Bohemia. Upon this event, he had the palace rased to the ground, as if to revenge the misery he had suffered there, or to blot out (if it might be) the reminiscences the pile awakened; but Henry III. restored it. It is said, this queen first introduced the side-saddle into England, before which period, ladies sat their horses as peasant-girls in the interior of Spain continue to do their mules, *en cavalier*. Her death occurred in 1394."

Here, too, if Hume be correct, Elizabeth broke her heart at seventy, of vain regrets for the death of Essex. What years of agony were compressed into those hours, when she sat listening for every sound to bring the token ring, which, from the promise she had given him with it, might afford her haughty spirit a plea for pardoning the favourite—and when it came not, and the hours went by, and he was dead, the proud, huge, sullen grief, that only showed itself in never smiling more; and in the end, the stormy outbreak, the shaking the dying lady on her bed, who, in "articulo *mortis*," confessed to having kept the signal back from motives of political revenge. The after unavailing passion of remorse, the tossing on the floor of her chamber, the refusing sustenance and medicine—she who had worn her hair powdered with pearls, casting aside the pillows that afforded her no rest, and dying on the ground, amidst strewed rushes—what a scene is this of royalty reduced to womanhood, and yielding even

life itself in bitter retribution for its violated impulses! But to return from this digression. While we recrossed the green, the clouds, true to their prognostic, passed away, leaving the face of heaven serene, as if an angel's wing had swept it. The narrow pavements in the high street shone white, and the road towards the hill lay like a broad sunbeam before us. Pleasant houses, each in a flowery court, with windows languidly half open, and muslin draperies, or exterior blinds coquettishly veiling the interiors, stood on one side and on the other. Laburnums dripped their golden rain above the walled enclosures, which the vines had climbed, and were peeping over inquisitively; while the faint scent of the syringa, upon a basis of lime blossom and mignonette, was making the hill-side redolent with odour. It was a morning to thank God one was abroad in it, and though the way be none of the shortest, nor the road, under a mid-day sun, the easiest of ascent, one has but to reach the top when the burden of fatigue falls at his feet, and were it thrice as wearying he is compensated! Out upon those who, in the pure insolence of pedantic travel, commence comparisons to its disadvantage—a prate of majesty in the lap of loveliness—who, when you point them out the swelling outlines of its woody shapes, talk grandly of the peak in Derbyshire—and long you had but seen the Giant's Causeway. The hanging woods, the pastoral meadows, the enlinked Surrey hills, circling the view and blending it with heaven, the varied foliage, the shining river, are "pretty, certainly pretty," —but then, what is it to the Rhine, with its crags and castles; the ruins of Rome, or the vast splendour of the mighty Alps? Their eyes have been so extended by the wonderful, that they see no charms in simple beauty, and wanting Olympus can never be content with Arcady. Give us that healthy appetite for nature that needs no stimulant to its enjoyment—an artist's eye for loveliness even in "minutiæ," who in the pencilled petals of a wild flower, the disposition of a fallen bough, the shadow of a drinking dove at the pool's brink, finds food for happy contemplation, and a most pure delight. Whether it is that the seats on the terrace offer themselves at the very moment that they are most desired; or that the soft luxuriant scenery they overlook compose the senses so entirely, that even our palpable flesh and blood is affected by it, but never had a "fresh tree's shade" appeared more pleasant, or rest more grateful, than that afforded us by one of the benches under the spreading boughs of a horse-chestnut tree.

From this point (the apex of the hill) says a modern topographer—but it must be before the leaves are out—"you have the bridge on the right; Ham and Petersham to the left; in the front, Twickenham and Pope's house; and at the extremity of the horizon, Windsor." We confess to not having seen the bridge, between which and us a leafy screen extended; and, except a dim vision, shadowy and indistinct as the Delhi of our imagination, the towered heights of Windsor were also hidden from us; but we were too enwrapt in present objects to regret the loss of a telescopic view, and feasted our eyes daintily with the living picture spread before us—from the park, downwards, stretching off towards the cordon of grey hills that bounds the sight, where woods, in all the leafiness of June, exhibiting every variety of shade and foliage—the bright green of the sycamore shining beside the massive plume-like branches of the wytch-elm—the drooping-boughs of the ash, neighboured

by aspiring poplars, and here and there a broad-armed oak (a sylvan Hercules beside a Psyche), appeared in juxtaposition with the soft, scented, fluttering leaves of the lime; then there were beech and maple, alder and aspen, with dusky firs masking it amongst them, and larches, whose last shoots seemed painted on the extremities of the old ones—hawthorn (sad-looking, having lost its flowers), with graceful rowans and elder-trees, showing white flakes of blossom; and many other "children of the wood," making together so glorious a "viretum," as would have charmed old Evelyn to see. Had we been near enough to mark the host of inferior vegetation, springing around, depending from, or adhering to, these pillars of the sylvan commonwealth, we should have found black briony, with dark and polished leaves, winning its way, like low-born industry (despite of difficulties) to high places; ivy, artistically tracing a delicate pattern on the elm's rough bark; and lady's-bower, arching from bough to bough, and strewing (as painters portray *Peace*) her frolic way with flowers: woodbine, too, like Mercy, bestowing graces on unsightly things, turning green leaves and knots of scented blossoms on seared and fallen branches, and clinging by them till they grow fresh and sweet from her pure fosterage. But we are running on, forgetful that "time and the hour wear through the *sweetest* day" as well as *roughest*, and we are yet no farther than the hill. Separating the eye from the woody steep, one knew where the villages of Ham and Petersham lay, by glimpses of red roofs, gable-ends of houses, and here and there a protruding chimney, sending up a respiration of thin blue smoke above the tree-tops; but an entire house, or even the profile of one, was not to be seen amongst the rich boscage that surrounded them. Meadows, in which the tall grass waved "lush and green," extended in the bottom, and between these and the villa'd banks of Twickenham, the river, with its swans and pleasure-barges, and now and then a huge canal-boat, glided on, still and polished as the face of a mirror.

Free as a forester we trod the park, with its broad greensward, its shady avenues, deer-haunted dells, and lovely views; its bosky glades, smooth drives, groups of trees, and little dingles, like the diminutive valleys about Reigate that Aubrey speaks of, "stored with wild thyme, sweet marjorum, burnell and beeches." Then we wandered by the river-side, with its grand mansions and fanciful cottage "ornées;" its smooth lawns edging the tide, and willows, with long fringy branches, dipping their leafy tresses like green-haired Naiads in it. An old man mowing reeds on a little island—a pagoda-looking place, all red paint and yellow-ochre—with a fisher under the shade of a group of poplars, were worth a painter's sketching; and now and then a white-sailed pleasure-boat went by, or gondola-like barge, filled with ladies, under silken awnings; sometimes a single rower in a pram, and then a wherry full of laughing children, with a swan sailing dreamily in their wake. Roses shadowed themselves in the river, and artificial mounts and hedges of geranium glowed scarlet in the sunshine, while clove-carnations, mignonette, and honeysuckle, breathed out their sweetness, as poets do their thoughts, spontaneously, and were no poorer for the world's enrichment. Here and there in grassy paddocks (one could almost fancy they comprehended their effect in pastoral scenery) cattle, with sleek and dappled skins, had couched themselves, as if to serve for models to T. Cooper. The fish

leaped in the Thames, the birds sang in the trees, happy parties wandered or glided about, and appeared to visit each other from the river. It was delicious—lovely! and with our thoughts still floating refreshingly on it, we turned regretfully (for all the vernal grasses were in blossom) into the field-path from the shore, which leads by Lady Tollemache's demesne back into Richmond. But our regrets were transient; summer had thrown so rich a coverlet over the lap of Nature, that, where the haymakers had not preceded us, the flowery plain that tempted Ceres from her mother's side was not more redolent of floral beauty than those green meads, crowfoot and scabious, and the broad-leaved plantain, with its feathery spikes of lilac fading into white, and scented like the "Shepherd de Madona."*

With sorrel waving wide its crimson seed, and quaking grass for ever vibrating with gentle motion its thread-like stems and knots of heart-shaped florets, and holding up his rayed shield in the sun (a naked gladiator 'midst speared grasses), the ox-eyed daisy forced his bold way through, and hung on every hand's-breadth of the field his fair round disk, in sign of victory. In reedy pools—haunts of night-loving moths and burnished dragon-flies (most sword and sceptre-like), the tall-leaved water-flag, with flower-crowned spadix, spread forth its triple "patines of bright gold," the innocent regalia of our childhood, when we played kings and queens on thrones of hay. Ah, me! one must be dull as the "fat weed on Lethe's wharf," an' he find not inspiration in such places. Every blade of grass is full of beauty, every flower-cup a living censer. The

> winged inhabitants,
> That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,

make every branch and hedge-row musical; while the blue nightshade's flowers and sunburnt honeysuckle, and pink and white wild roses, spread their efflorescence on every side, and make the gazer's heart o'erflow with happiness. Such, at least, were our sensations as we wandered on, turning from flowers to think of Lady Wortley, and Pope, and Thomson, and of Walpole's visits to the "Villa," and of Swift and Stella, and Sir William Temple's gardens at Shene, and his nice essays, full of philosophy and flower-love, our path the while leading through meads as lovely as the last; then to a long, neglected avenue, with lights and shadows quivering through the branches, and paving all the greensward at our feet; and so on, through fields with haymakers at work, and waves of scented herbage strewing them, till at last a shady lane, with meeting tree-tops, vocal as an aviary, and an undertone of bacchanalian bees finding their way irregularly home, brought us almost to the foot of the *Hill*, up which we climbed, to take a farewell look of all the beauty we had revelled in. The boats became more scarce upon the river, the foliage gradually darkened, and a faint haze filled up the openings in the distant hills, and, spreading to the woods, threw round their branchy outlines a purple glory; while in the west, cushioned on golden fleeces, the sun went down, and, as we turned away, a belt of gorgeous clouds, aureus, and pink, and topaz, lined with silver, the floating scarf of a departing iris faded away, leaving us nothing of our day at Richmond but the remembrance of it, and a desire, with quaint old Izaak Walton, to make a "recreation of a recreation," and wish our friends a pleasant hour to read it.

* Sweet coltsfoot.

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XIV.

VAN DIEST no sooner left the Exchange than he hurried to the house of Cornelius, in order to satisfy, if possible, his curiosity as to the designs of the family respecting Margaret. He was doomed, however, to be disappointed. In vain did he angle for information, with a patience and perseverance deserving of better success; he could elucidate nothing; and his old friend, Cornelius, usually so frank and open, repulsed his advances with a sullenness quite foreign to his nature.

"They shall not foil me thus," thought Van Diest. "In the presence of his wife, Master Cornelius will not dare to speak; but if I can but get him to myself, alone!"

Hardly had the worthy burgher seized upon this prospect of appeasing his insatiable thirst after knowledge, than he applied all his ingenuity to the task of withdrawing Van Meeren from his home. This he found more difficult than he had anticipated, and was obliged to make use of many a *finesse* to accomplish his desire. But he was now in his element; and when at length he bore away the reluctant Cornelius, he left the house more delighted with the result of his visit than if he had actually obtained its object.

When the mother and daughter were left to themselves, they fell back into the silence and abstractedness from which Van Diest had aroused them. The wheels turned round actively, and the fine white thread looked glossy as silk, as, escaping from their busy fingers, it entwined itself round the ebony spindle. An unusual length of time was allowed to elapse before the silence was interrupted. It was Mistress van Meeren who broke it.

"You see, Margaret," she said, in a sharp, discontented tone, "all the town believes we are about to do a wise thing by you. People would not take up a notion of that sort so positively, if common sense itself did not suggest it."

"But, dear mother," said Margaret, with a smile, that rather hovered around than settled on her lips, "is our good neighbour the safest interpreter of what the world says?"

"Oh, yes," said the mother, with some show of natural shrewdness, "for he only repeats what he hears—he never has a thought that he can call his own."

"But," urged Margaret, "may not the report originate in idle gossip, founded upon appearances?"

"No, Greta; it originates in the belief that every mother, in my difficult situation, would jump at an opportunity of gaining such a protection for her daughter as Lopez' love affords. Everybody in this world is inclined to think that others will act as they would themselves in similar circumstances."

"Surely I am not in such need of protection," said Margaret, raising

her head proudly. "We have numerous friends both here and at Mechlin, where your patrician connexions give us some right to expect——"

"Nothing," interrupted Mistress van Meeren, pettishly. "Had not my patrician relations been ruined, then, perhaps—but everything would have been different in that case. Poverty, you well know, has dispersed them so completely, that I am not myself aware whither they have wandered, or where I could, at the present time, find any remnant of them. You know how very limited is your father's family—blood relations, indeed, he has none, except your uncle Paul; for, strange to say, ever since their grandfather or great-grandfather, I scarcely know which, first settled here, the Van Meerens have never intermarried with any family of Antwerp: thus, they stand now as much alone as did their ancestors when they first settled here. But, were it otherwise—were our friends bound to us by the nearer ties of consanguinity, what would that matter? Who thinks of others when people have so much cause to think of themselves?"

"I confess I cannot bring myself to think so lightly of myself or others," said Margaret, with pique, "as to imagine that we could not find a person of pretensions, somewhat superior to Chievosa's, to—to——"

"To marry you, you would doubtless say," replied the anxious mother. "Alas! were times different, I should indeed agree with you. With your personal advantages—for you are very much what I was at your age in that respect; with the additional weight of a large fortune, and an education such as very few girls in Antwerp can boast—although their accomplishments are proverbially greater than those of women elsewhere; with all these good reasons for ambition on our part, I should certainly not only have looked higher for you than Chievosa, but very high indeed. Less than a patrician, I think, I should not have accepted." Mistress van Meeren paused in her work, and thoughtfully raised her eyes to the ceiling. After a few minutes of reflection, which her daughter did not choose to interrupt, she continued:—"Many men have married for love, and for money too, far beneath themselves. I have heard that a Count of Gueldres once married the daughter of a merchant, to obtain her wealth."

"That was in days of yore," said Margaret, with a sigh.

"Our days are not without examples of the same kind," said the elder lady, still bent upon a train of thought but too familiar to her mind. "In your case, Greta, fate seemed to foretel one as plain as fate can speak. The ring that I have so often mentioned to you——"

"Belonged to a house," said Margaret, "too exalted for any chance, however extravagant, to connect with mine."

"Ay, but the omen of a count's coronet may apply to any count, and Chievosa is surely closely connected with some noble house. That cannot be doubted."

"At least, there seems much reason to think so," said Margaret, musingly.

"But putting aside all Chievosa's supposed advantages," said Mistress van Meeren, more seriously, and approaching nearer to her daughter, "the *real*, the undeniable one, is his being a Spaniard."

"I have heard," said Margaret, "that the king persecutes as many in Spain as he does here. There are many Spanish Protestants, mamma."

"Yes; we have some even among the merchants established in this city; but Lopez Chievosa is none of them. He is a true Catholic."

"So am I. He has surely not the advantage of me in piety."

"Perhaps not," replied the fond mother; "you are a good, pious child; but I see I cannot make you understand my apprehensions. Your utter want of experience puts you beyond the reach of truth and conviction, Greta; your filial obedience and duty ought to make you trust me implicitly with the guidance of your fate."

"Then you do wish so very much for this marriage," said Margaret, looking up into her mother's face with an expression of deep affection.

"Ardently, Greta," replied the mother, returning her gaze with tenfold tenderness; "and that for your own dear sake, even more than for my own. Oh! why will you not believe me, my child?"

"Because," answered the young girl, after a slight hesitation, "not only does my uncle Paul oppose it, but even my father does not take your view of the subject."

"Alas! that they do not. How shall I find words to convince you, for your own good, of the danger in which, though a good Catholic, you may stand. Innocence is not always a safeguard. I could tell you that which would convince you if it were not so sad a tale, and one that I was especially to keep from your knowledge; and yet I do not know why I should not give my whole confidence to my only child, when of an age to deserve it. But then, on the other hand, being the private history of your uncle Paul, it almost seems as if it were not right to reveal it without his leave."

"The history of uncle Paul!—the reason why he is at times so sad—so abstracted—why he has not married, and has led so joyless a life? Oh, mamma! surely—surely there can be no harm in your telling me that!"

"To say the truth, I can see none, for the affair was public enough, although, out of respect for the feelings of your uncle, we have always considered it in the light of a family secret."

"You excite my curiosity more and more," said Margaret, eagerly; "although, ever since I can remember anything, I have longed to know the secret of uncle Paul's sorrow."

"If it were merely to gratify your curiosity," said her mother, "I should scarcely like to speak of it; but the sad story, which has always stood before my eyes like a terrible warning, may also carry a moral of prudence to your young heart, of which I think you stand in need. You must know, Margaret," she began, with the tone of one about to expatiate on something at great length, "long before I was married—nay, before I even knew your father, when he and Paul were yet very young—by-the-by, I should not forget to tell you that you had an elder uncle, or great uncle—some relation, I scarcely know in what degree, for it is a matter on which I never could obtain exact information, it is a sore subject with both brothers; in short, this member of the Van Meeren family, be he who he may, disappeared in a very mysterious manner; that is to say, he went away one fine morning and never came again, nor was he ever after heard of in these parts."

"How strange!" exclaimed Margaret, who, having laid aside her spindle, was listening with eager attention.

"Well, in consequence of this event, at least so I understood, the

whole fortune and business devolved on your father and uncle, in spite of their youth; but by the manner in which they set about all things, every one declared they were wise, steady, and prudent, and they soon won general esteem and confidence. They were then equally active as to business. Their tastes led them, however, to seek their diversions in very different circles. I must not omit to mention that, at this time, both were strict and zealous Catholics."

"My uncle Paul a Catholic!" exclaimed Margaret, in much surprise.

"Yes, my child," and, as I have been told—for, I repeat it, I knew him not in those days—a very warm one. My husband was then, as now, passionately fond of music, and spent most of his evenings fiddling with Van Diest, then a gay, idle young sprig about town."

"I can never imagine him young," said Margaret, with a half smile.

"It is difficult, Greta, for the growing generation to imagine that those who seem to them so full of years and of heaviness have been what they are themselves, as promising, as full of hopes. But time comes for all; it will come for you, too, as for poor Van Diest, though you be so proud of happy seventeen. But as I was saying, your father and his particular friends—poor Cornelius Grappheus was of the number—used to while away time with music, and attending all the weddings and christenings to which they could get invited. In short, he led an active and a merry life, though always within the bounds of the strictest propriety and soberness. Not so your uncle. His graver disposition led him to avoid public and frivolous amusements, and he soon formed an intimacy to which he devoted every leisure hour. There dwelt then within this city a family called Van Hoven. They were country-people, as I believe, who spent some years here merely on account of the public schools the town then abounded with, and by which they were desirous that their children should profit. They were not rich, but in easy circumstances; and as they grew up, the daughter became as celebrated for her beauty as the son for his abilities, and the world called the Van Hovens happy parents. Somehow or other, powerful protectors offered themselves for the one, and many suitors for the other; but Floris had not yet chosen the career he meant eventually to pursue, and Anna refused many an advantageous match. This part of her conduct is easily explained, when I tell you that your uncle Paul had become first her brother's favourite and then her own. She is said to have been of a grave disposition, but of surpassing gentleness, and devotedly attached to your uncle. You, who know how affectionate he still is to those he loves, even now, when sorrow and time have warped his temper and cooled his heart, may imagine how powerful was the feeling that bound him to Anna. Floris, who you will be astonished to hear is no other than Father Eustace——"

"My own Father Eustace!" cried Margaret, still more astonished.

"Father Eustace, of the *Prémontrés*, then the most comely youth in Antwerp, as his sister was the fairest girl. He, too, could have furthered both his ambition and interest by an advantageous alliance, and was so gentle and clever that he was a universal favourite even with the old. Floris, then, was Paul's bosom friend. Their minds seemed more congenial than those of the brothers, so that, at this time, my husband in great measure lost sight of Paul, except during the hours of business. What the priests call heresy, and the lenient denominate the Protestant

faith, was fast spreading in Antwerp, by means of the foreign traders and the youths that had travelled abroad; and the pope, the emperor, and all the people in authority, were greatly moved. At length the emperor, wishing to bring the matter to a conclusion, fulminated his terrible edicts against the Protestants."

"What were those edicts, pray?"

"They were cruel beyond all belief. Every look, every word, became a crime, and was punished with death in one way or another. To speak kindly of a Protestant; to open, perchance, a book of their tenets; to suffer one who was in the least connected with such matters to cross our thresholds; to give bread, meat, or water to one of this sect, even were he starving by your house-door; to speak one kind word—all these, and even less offences, were visited with loss of life upon the offender, and of property upon his survivors."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Margaret, deeply interested.

"The Van Hovens and the Van Meerens felt much sympathy with the general woe these harsh measures spread through the land; but still they entertained no personal apprehensions, for they were not only firm adherents to the true faith, but also not, in the slightest degree, connected with any one of the persecuted sect: thus, though sorrowful, they were not afraid; indeed, so full of confidence were they in their own innocence, that Paul and Anna became betrothed in the midst of this public calamity. You may imagine to what a height this rose, when I tell you that the present persecutions have been, until now, but shadows of what they then were. I have been told by those who knew it well, that no less than sixty thousand people perished in the flames, and one-half of the victims were women and children."

"It is horrible!" again exclaimed Margaret.

"Yes; but Greta, the flames were not the only means by which victims were done to death; many and various ways, all equally horrible, were resorted to. Poor Anna perished by the most cruel of all."

"Oh! pray mamma proceed," urged Margaret, eagerly, as her mother paused a moment.

"Yes, it was horrid!" she continued, with a slight shudder; "and that, too, for a trifling cause. She was too soft-hearted—that was her only fault. One summer evening Floris and Paul had gone forth together. The parents, too, were from home, and Anna sat alone by her window, working at some little article of dress for her approaching nuptials, and little dreaming of what fate had ordained for her. Occasionally she cast a glance without to see if Paul were coming. The street was no thoroughfare, yet it struck her it was unusually empty; but she fancied the fineness of the weather had tempted the people to walk abroad. The house of the Van Hovens formed a corner, and was divided by a dark narrow lane from the neighbouring one—the high back wall of a third house ended the lane rather abruptly, so that it had no issue, except towards the street; it was, I believe, for the most part, used to throw filth into from the kitchens that overlooked it. The room in which Anna sat commanded a view of the main street, but led by a small door into the kitchen, which, as I have told you, opened on the lane. This minute description is necessary to make you understand what followed. Anna was, then, gazing listlessly into the deserted street, up the whole length of which she beheld no living thing but a miserable, squalid-

looking dog, crawling fearfully along the pavement, evidently so feeble from hunger that it could scarcely stand steady on its paws. It sought in vain among the occasional heaps of rubbish it encountered for scraps of food that chance might have thrown there, until it came opposite to the window at which Anna was sitting. The poor creature's intelligence was sharpened by its sufferings—it paused, and looked wistfully up into the young girl's face. Its look was so full of piteous meaning that Anna rose and hurried to the kitchen to fetch it some food. She could not instantly lay her hand on what she sought; she was, indeed, so long about it that she feared at her return the starving dog would be gone. But no—there he still sat opposite to the house, watching the windows with steady vigilance. Anna threw him bread and meat, which the poor beast devoured in a manner that showed how cruelly her help had been needed. When the first irresistible impulse of nature was satisfied, the animal began a strange by-play that puzzled Anna not a little. It would not eat what she next offered, though evidently not yet satiated, but looked wistfully across the street—whined and barked by turns—then ran in and out of an obscure alley, nearly opposite, with increasing restlessness and agitation. Anna coaxed in vain—the animal looked grateful, but not satisfied; until at length the mystery was solved by a man cautiously emerging from the obscure alley, and advancing with a stealthy and feeble step towards the place where Anna had flung the broken victuals to the dog. She shuddered at the sight. Although she had heard such calamities were of this world, never before had she beheld a human being starving. The deadly pallor, haggard looks, and, more than all, the manners of the man, went to her heart more than could have done the most touching entreaties. He was frightened and wild, like a cowed hound after he has felt the lash, and threw himself on the fragments left by the dog with a brutish delight, which it sickened Anna to behold. Her eyes filled with tears—the miserable object of her pity had evidently observed her, but retaining his humble aspect he did not even attempt to excite her compassion further. She remained for some time in doubt how to act. He might—nay, surely, he must be a heretic. No man, however destitute, could wander through the prosperous and charitable city of Antwerp in such utter helplessness but one of that unfortunate creed. She hesitated; but when she saw the but half-satisfied animal watch with evident delight his master finishing his own limited portion, not even attempting to touch another morsel, the instinct of the brute put to shame the humanity of the Christian. Anna's feelings grew stronger than her prudence, and she ventured by signs to make the man understand her sympathy for him. He seemed at first too astonished and fearful to credit the evidence of his own eyes; but when he did, he uttered no sound, but mutely raised his hands to heaven, and stood for a moment as if lost in silent thanksgiving. He then followed Anna's cautious direction, and turned into the dark lane behind her house. Her next act was to fly to the kitchen-door, open it, and gaze warily around to see if there were any one near who could watch her proceedings. Satisfied with the result of her examination, she bade the sufferer enter. He was so weak that he could scarcely articulate. Carefully shutting themselves in, secure of being now beyond the reach of observation, Anna administered to his wants. Perceiving that the good old wine, of which she had forced him to partake, revived him, she hastily thrust two bottles into a hand basket,

and adding more provisions for master and dog—for she could not overlook the faithful creature who had first drawn her attention towards his owner—she asked the man what she could do more. He explained that she had been that day the means of preserving his life, for he was actually perishing of hunger; that none would, or dared, to relieve his necessities, though he had many blood relations in Antwerp; that he could not even obtain the shelter of their stables or kennels for a night's rest, and had wandered about for weeks like a houseless, masterless dog, none remaining true to him but his own attached cur, whom nothing could tempt from his side. If, he added, she felt any desire to prolong his worthless life, the only available manner would be to bestow upon him the means of flight—money. Anna had none at her disposal. The case was urgent; time was flying fast; what she had already done urged her on to do more—she gave the stranger several trinkets, of much value, that decorated her person, the many gifts of Paul."

"Poor uncle!" murmured Margaret, involuntarily.

"Yes, it was a walk that cost him dear. The man, much refreshed, left her with a thousand blessings, and Anna anxiously watched his safe departure from under her roof. It was when he had quite disappeared from her sight, and not till then, that she began to feel uneasy about herself. You are just the girl, Greta, to have acted as she did."

"Certainly, mother!" said Margaret, with a glowing cheek.

"Listen, then, to the sequel, and you will see how miserable was the result to herself. By a chance, not unusual with him, Paul did not accompany Floris to his home that evening; and the brother, eager to pursue a favourite study, did not approach his sister. Anna retired for the night with her little episode, and fears for its consequences, still undivulged; for to her parents she dared not confess what she had done. Imagine, then, the surprise of all, when the next day Anna was dragged from her home by men of justice, as they called themselves, and thrown into prison, upon the accusation of having fed and relieved a heretic preacher, and favoured his flight. In vain did she plead her ignorance of his real character, and of his plans. In vain did she assert—what after all was but the plain truth—that she had merely thought of relieving a starving pauper, and had done so for the love of God. But truth was unavailing; so were the intercessions of her friends. Paul would have spent every farthing—reduced himself to utter beggary—to save her. Floris would never have asked another boon of his powerful patrons. But, alas! money and friends, everything was vain; even her innocence availed her not. The proofs were easily found—had there been none, it would have been all the same—as in so many other cases. A curious neighbour, or an idle, gossiping, serving-wench from over the way, had, doubtless, betrayed her; for none else could have so narrowly watched her movements and remain unperceived. Witnesses, however, were found in numbers to what two persons, at most, might have discovered. Besides, Anna never denied the fact. The man, too, was traced, though not caught, and the trinkets were seized, by the sale of which he had contrived to support himself until he reached the coast. He was, indeed, saved—but Anna lost! The friends of the family proved so clearly that her parents, as well as Paul and Floris, had had no share in the transaction, and that they were, moreover, unimpeachable Catholics, that they were not included in the trial which ended in Anna's condemnation. I cannot

tell by what means her lover and brother got speech of her in her prison, but they saw her constantly. Their grief far exceeded hers. I have been told she was placid and resigned like a saint, even unto the end. She merely entreated, as the last and greatest favour, that Paul and Floris should be present at her death, and not leave her until all should be over. This request she made in such passionate terms that they could not refuse, although they both felt they never could recover the shock. The next morning Anna was led in great pomp to the place destined for her execution. It had often served of late for similar purposes, and the people flocked as to a procession, to obtain a view of her death. I cannot understand them, I confess; Paul and Floris went to accomplish a duty, but the others—well, I suppose many went the same way afterwards. It was before some gate or other, I forget which—without the town, but close by the *fossés*—that a moderate sized hole had been dug, sufficient for a tall woman—for Anna was of a good height—to stand in, her head scarcely reaching the top. Paul and his friend contrived, in spite of all impediments, to stand close by the pit. There were men provided—I wonder there were any found cruel enough—to throw the freshly dugged earth upon Anna until she should be completely buried beneath it; it was then to be stamped upon until the ground became firm, and the place watched, until those who might wish to reopen the grave should find nothing within it but a corpse."

"Great God!" ejaculated Margaret, pale and breathless, as she clasped her hands tightly together, and leant back in her chair as if overpowered with emotion, "are such things possible?"

"They are, my child—all evil is possible to man. Thank God, I never knew her, or I could not tell the tale as I now do. Anna made a last protestation of innocence, also a solemn declaration of dying as she had lived in the Catholic faith—forgave her enemies, and intreated her friends to remember that God had permitted her death, and in such a manner, for the weal of her soul, and had thus distinguished her, humble as she was, to exalt her to the lot of the saints. Her last words were very impressive. She had previously made many and touching recommendations to Paul and Floris in private; but this, her public farewell, drew the sympathies of all towards her; besides, she had never appeared so beautiful. Indignation was general—murmurs were loudly heard—they rose even to imprecations—but no effort was made to save her. She was placed in the pit. her hands were crossed meekly over the crucifix, and, keeping her eyes on Paul, who had obtained such a situation as that she might see him to the very last, her martyrdom began. Shovels of earth were thrown in upon her, slowly, as upon the dead, until nought remained uncovered but her face: she murmured audibly the name of Paul, and shortly afterwards her lovely countenance was concealed from view. Nature became stronger than will; the earth was seen to heave with her convulsive movements; still Paul and Floris stood firm. But when the monsters, to conclude the horrid sacrifice, began to tread upon the earth that concealed her, Paul raved like a madman—his friends had the greatest difficulty in leading him away in time to prevent his fury becoming positive insanity. Floris fainted. The place was closely watched. Your father, who had witnessed his brother's cruel trial, hovered in vain round the spot, in the hope that, unsuspected as he was, he might have a chance of removing her remains; but when the little mound was left free it was indeed a

grave. Around it soon appeared many others, enclosing more and more victims; the youngest, loveliest, and most inoffensive were soon laid side by side with Anna, all perishing by the same horrid death, but none more fair or more regretted. Well," continued Mistress van Meeren, who saw that Margaret was too much moved and agitated to make any observation, "sorrow acts very differently on diverse characters. Not one of those who loved Anna grieved for her alike. Paul, after a short time, went over to England. It was then that the Sturgeons became his best friends; I believe they were very kind to him—that he owes them much. He spent there a few years, then came home an altered man in every respect, a stubborn heretic—a discontented subject—a determined enemy to power and all those who possess it—full of opposition, suspicion, gloom, and all sad things; in short, an unhappy man. The shock had been great to Floris; too gentle to entertain the same lasting bitterness of spirit as had Paul, he grew too timid to trust life again—he withdrew from it completely. He took the vows at the monastery of the *Prémontrés*, where, as I have told you, he has been long known and beloved under the name of Father Eustace."

"How they must have suffered!" said Margaret, through her tears, that were falling fast.

"Doubtless they did; but their grief was nothing—*nothing*, Margaret, believe me, compared with that of Anna's parents. No one saw it, it is true; but I have often pictured it to myself until I could have screamed with horror at the ideas my own fancy conjured up."

"And what became of them?"

"They fled the very night previous to their child's execution. Floris never could re-enter the house, which became confiscated; but when the officers of justice took possession, they found all the rings, gold chains, medals, everything valuable that they had possessed — all their fine clothes, and more money than one even suspected them to have; so that they must have wandered forth like beggars over the land. No one ever heard of them more. Doubtless, they did not long survive their beloved child! Oh! Margaret, how often have I thought of their feelings in that dark night, and on the ensuing morning! I could not have survived it! It was this dreadful warning that made me tremble, when most other women would have rejoiced, when a daughter was born to me. That was what made me so anxious about your religion — induced me to implore Father Eustace to maintain you in the true faith. Alas! more, I am afraid, out of concern for your temporal, than your eternal, welfare. Even in past days of peace and happiness the remembrance of this sad scene has made me anxious and fearful. And now, my child, you know *why* I so ardently wish your marriage with Chievosa, — why I am so anxious to see you settled beyond the chance of harm. Margaret, I could not survive such an event! You cannot understand my feelings now; when you are a mother, and then only, can you imagine them. Grant me, dearest, what I ask of your love, when I might demand it of your obedience."

Margaret was deeply affected by the tale she had heard, passing gradually through all the phases of interest, from mere curiosity to real and heartfelt sympathy. Her tears had flowed freely on the sad narrative of her uncle's misfortunes; but possessed of much of his indifference to

danger, or perhaps merely influenced by the ardour of youth, she did not suffer her mind to dwell on the possibility of her own fate, in any way, resembling that of Anna.

"My poor, poor uncle!" said she; "and did thus happiness pass from this world for him, without even leaving a trace of its having existed? And Anna—where is her grave? I shall go and pray over it, and bring her memory the offering of my tears."

"I am not even aware before which gate the tragedy was enacted, and so many graves surround hers, that the exact spot would be difficult to find, except for those most interested. For others, perhaps, the very memory of that fearful event has long since died away. The house in which she lived has been demolished, and a new street has been made upon the place where it once stood."

"Poor Anna! There is, then, no memorial of her remains on this earth, except in the hearts of her brother and poor uncle Paul!"

"There is yet one," said Mary, involuntarily sinking her voice, and bending nearer to the ear of her daughter. "Shortly after all was over, one of our best artists, who had been her friend, was commissioned to make a picture for one of the side-altars of our cathedral. St. Catherine's martyrdom was to be the subject of the painting. He availed himself of the opportunity to commemorate that of Anna. The saint bears, it is said, a most striking resemblance to the unfortunate girl. In features, in expression, the likeness is perfect: some persons say most of the figures in the picture are portraits. At one time people flocked to see this piece; but the affair has long since sunk into forgetfulness—as all things do, however much they may excite public sympathy at the moment,—and few can now tell what it really represents. Your uncle Paul at one time dared not even go near the church."

"I have never prayed at St. Catherine's altar," said Margaret, pushing away her spinning-wheel and rising, her recent tears still hanging like dewdrops on her eye-lashes. "Poor uncle!"

"Say, rather, poor Greta!" replied her mother. "Oh! my child, if this cannot touch you, I have no words left with which to persuade or entreat. I have often pictured to myself your father and me flying through the dark night like *them*, and standing at daybreak, hand-in-hand, by the side of some dark waters, childless and alone; and I have thought that, in such an hour, the spirit of evil might tempt me, and I have shuddered at my own thoughts, and prayed to the Lord that they might not weigh against me as a sin. Oh, Margaret! Margaret! think of me—think of your father."

At these words Margaret threw her arms round her mother's neck, and, concealing her face in her bosom, sobbed aloud. At that moment the door opened, and Cornelius remained for a minute a silent and astonished spectator of the scene within. But the flood-gates of confidence were opened, and the father, whose heart was full of uneasiness, soon joined his influence to that of the mother. He had heard alarming rumours about town; and he could almost forgive Chievosa for being a Spaniard, so eager was he to ensure a protector for himself and his house.

Chapter XV.

"The council has indeed been stormy," said the Count of Egmont, as he sank into a richly-carved chair, and leant his head upon his hand, whilst his elbow rested on a square table placed before him, an air of fatigue as well as thoughtfulness clouding his open brow.

"I have not, then, proved a false prophet," replied his secretary, whose whole appearance plainly indicated that he had not been in attendance at the council. His habitual pallor was deepened into the sallowness of ill-health; a black velvet cap did not altogether conceal the bandages that bound his head; a long loose robe of rich material was closely wrapped around his languid form, and physical pain seemed to deepen the melancholy, habitual to his countenance, into positive sadness; yet his eye was lighted up by a strong interest, and framed the question ere his lips had time to give it vent.

"Yes," continued the count, as eager to communicate as the other might be to listen. "That fall from your horse at the very gates of Brussels was a most unpleasant accident—so severe a fall too—and at a moment when of all others you were most necessary to me. It was a foolish affair—you too, so skilful a rider—to spur your horse in so sudden and extravagant a manner. The animal, not accustomed to such usage, of course took fright—it was fortunate that you got off so cheaply."

"It was an involuntary movement on my part," answered the secretary, with a mournful smile. "I was absorbed in thought."

"That, too, when I was telling you of what lies so near my heart—when I was discussing the merits of my Isabel, and the happy and early chance I had of settling her in life. But you take interest in nothing but public affairs."

Deep crimson flushed the cheek of the invalid, and a half-suppressed sigh escaped him; but the count noticed neither, and continued—

"Remaining so long a bachelor is not a good thing, Casembrot; it will gradually cool the natural warmth of your heart. I have long thought of you, too, my friend; your happiness concerns me as much as if you were a child of mine."

"You are too good," hastily answered the sick man, "much too good, my lord, to think of me at all, more especially at so critical a moment as the present. My happiness is, and will be to my latest hour, wrapt in the glory and safety of yourself and your house. But, as you say public affairs go first with me, pray tell me, how went the day?"

"It was the winding up of last night's council, which the lateness of the hour alone interrupted. I would have consulted with you on my return, for I scarcely closed my eyes even during the few hours allotted for rest; but, in your present state of suffering, I would not deprive you of your repose. We all spoke rather freely our minds—I especially—more so than, I dare say, you would have called prudent; but Orange led the way. He advanced more boldly—more to the point than any of us. All the friends of the princess, all the hangers-on upon the court, as I may call them—Barlaimont, Croy, Meghen, strenuously opposed the admittance of the confederate nobles into Brussels, as being unsafe, and allowing them too great a latitude. The Prince of Orange pleaded their rights as gentlemen and loyal subjects, saying that, as such, they were

entitled to present petitions when and where they pleased; that these gentlemen ought not to be doubted; that many of them were his kinsmen and allies, nor could he permit shame to be cast upon them. He insisted that what they demanded was but justice, no less to the king than to themselves, as well as to the country at large. He spoke warmly, eloquently, of the increasing evils brought by the Inquisition into this land; of the uselessness of attempting to maintain an institution equally hateful to high and low; how vain, in short, such an attempt would be, when none of the governors of the provinces, himself included (and he appealed to all of us there present), would consent to deliver over to the flames sixty thousand innocent men—innocent in all else but in matters of opinion. He declared it to be a severity as prejudicial to the interests of the king as to the welfare of the country, and that no true-hearted Fleming would ever consent to its being established."

"The prince, then, completely unveiled himself," said Casembrot, joyfully. "I knew that his countenance would never be withheld from his friends in the hour of need. What was the effect of his example?"

"It drew us all out, of course. De Horn spoke manfully, perhaps (I, at least, thought so) more bluntly than the occasion required. Mansfeldt moderated, and stood half with us, half with the princess; but the majority was on our side. I was half ashamed to see how clamorous we all grew, although opposed to a lady and a princess; how we forced our will upon her, I had almost said, in so ungenerous a manner. I confess I felt for her, standing alone, so slightly supported, against so many, when, one by one, those whom she or her brother had trusted turned against her. We plainly showed that she could and ought not to reckon on any of us. The Prince of Orange spoke for the governors of provinces; De Horn for the navy."

"And you, my lord," interrupted Casembrot, with anxiety deeply depicted on his countenance; "what said you for the army?"

"That I never would fight in favour of the penal laws!"

"It was a bold word, my lord," said the secretary, shaking his head gravely.

"Surely," said the count, with an air of unfeigned astonishment, "you would not have a Fleming force his countrymen into the flames at the sword's point!"

"God forbid," ejaculated Casembrot, "that so black a deed should sully a name so bright as yours! But, perhaps, you might have worded your determination more cautiously."

"It is not for an old soldier," said the count, with a smile, "to pick his words like a wily cardinal, or a mincing dame. My services in the field must excuse my roughness in the cabinet. It were well if all meant so honestly by their king and country as I do. No! I never will recal those words, nor even wish them unsaid; nor do I think myself in any degree the worse subject for being a true patriot. Philip himself cannot be so blind and unjust as to think so. No: I do not regret that. It was painful, but necessary, to oppose the overstrained zeal of the princess, and her too literal compliance with her brother's wishes. But what I really regret, and cannot think of without pain, is the rude, unmannerly way in which we all broke out with our private complaints and griefs against the king, in the presence of Madame de Parme, as if she were answerable for, or had any power to redress them. This, however, was the fault of the Prince

of Orange. He led the way, by detailing, one by one, every grievance, public or private, that he could think of since the king's accession to the throne. We followed up without pause or mercy. The princess bore it with a calm dignity that struck, I believe, her veriest enemies. Once only did her coolness fail her. It was when Orange assured her, in his deliberate, emphatic manner, that he knew to a certainty the king had nothing so much at heart as the ruin of the House of Nassau, and that he only abided his time to take his life. During his speech he kept his piercing glance firmly rivetted upon Margaret. Then did her courage, for one moment, fail her—her cheek blanched—her eye drooped before his stern gaze, and her hand trembled. Barlaimont drew close beside her; she whispered a few words, to which he replied in a tone so low as to render it impossible for us to know what passed between them. Her weakness was, however, but momentary. It passed away without leaving a trace of its having existed. It was finally agreed that Brederode and his friend should be received, and a moderation of the edicts granted by the princess in answer to their request, which we all hope and trust the king may be led to ratify—a result of which the regent appears to entertain no doubt. Thus shall we deprive the confederates of every excuse for covert and illegal acts of aggression, and yet procure some ease to the oppressed people. This was the final decision; with which the princess was, or seemed to be, well satisfied, though many said she would have been more so with a very different issue."

"So far it is well," said the secretary, after a moment's pause. "You have to-day most gloriously silenced all the unfair calumnies that envy and malignity dared to throw upon your name at your return from Spain."

"Do you really think so?" exclaimed the count, joyfully. "That, indeed, was my chief aim."

"And," said Casembrot, continuing his own train of thought, and little heeding the interruption, "so long as you follow the footsteps of the Prince of Orange, little need be apprehended; but having once entered on the same path, it were most unsafe to deviate from it. Have you ever thought of this, my lord?"

"I will not trouble myself to think on such a subject," answered the count, haughtily. "I will pursue no man's road but so long as it may chance to be my own. But, Casembrot, I am thoroughly weary of public matters; let us recur for refreshment to those of a private nature. The bond of amity and brotherhood between the Prince of Orange and myself will be drawn tighter in one respect, at least, by the proposed union of his brother Louis and my Isabel. When last a Nassau sought a bride in our house, it certainly was not to his disadvantage. Many a fair estate, and many a bright jewel, did my cousin of Buren bring to William the Silent. My poor Isabel is far from being an heiress, God wot! and it is flattering to my paternal feelings to see her sought thus eagerly for herself alone."

"Your interest, my lord—your alliance may be of double value at the present crisis."

"You do not mean to insinuate," said the count, his eye flashing with anger, "that any one dares to dream of buying me over?"

Casembrot remained silent—too weak, perhaps, to venture on a topic so delicate, or knowing by experience that he was more likely to persuade

by silence than by words. The eloquence of a well-timed silence is but too little understood, or too seldom resorted to, in cases where it is important to convince; it is often successful, whilst eagerness generally defeats its own object. After a pause the count, seeing no further opposition was likely to ensue, resumed in a softened tone—

"Be the motive what it may, the offer is too advantageous to be refused; nor do I see anything objectionable in Louis of Nassau."

"He is wild and reckless," answered Casembrot, with energy.

"He is a soldier, and has more of the freedom of the camp about him than of the graces of the court. As to his being somewhat hot-headed, that is rather a merit in my eyes than a defect. It is pleasant in familiar intercourse to read the heart of a friend. I like not your covert, cautious man—he never belongs but to himself."

As he spoke, the eye of the count fell full upon the pallid and worn countenance of his secretary. It might have been chance, yet Casembrot grew paler with a sort of undefined, yet uneasy consciousness. He shrunk, nervously, from the honest glance of his patron, and articulated, in a low, hesitating tone—

"It is not always in man's power to open his heart even to those who would have no right to blame what they found there."

"I know of no such cases," replied the count, bluntly; "I never hid my thoughts from friend or foe, nor can I see any reason why others should. Wiles and timid caution are only fit for the weak, and shame on the man who, directly or indirectly, acknowledges himself such."

"Alas! I am afraid many feel themselves weaker than children in their secret bosoms, though they cover that weakness with steel and iron."

"Come, come," said the count, laughing, "this sentiment smacks too much of the sick couch. A few days of abstinence, and a few drugs from the apothecary, make women of us all; when you once more back a horse, and breathe the free air of the fields, mind and body will recover their tone. But some time must elapse, I fear, before you will be able to try their beneficial effects. Your hurts are too severe to allow of any trifling, nor shall I myself leave Brussels so soon as I had hoped; in fact, so protracted may be my stay, that I shall send off a messenger to the countess to beg her presence here, so you will no longer feel confinement irksome. Louis of Nassau must be allowed his opportunities."

The invalid involuntarily started at this announcement; but the smile of pleasure that had lighted up his wan countenance faded away at this last insinuation.

"Be not too rash in this matter for God's sake, my lord! The manner in which Count Louis has launched into actual opposition to the king's wishes is so open, and his religious tenets are so obnoxious, that such an union might, if too hastily concluded, expose you to the king's severest displeasure."

"It is strange that this should never have occurred to me before," replied the count, thoughtfully; "when now you point it out, it strikes me most forcibly. Yet, after having formally accepted his proposals, how to refuse without assigning what the Nassaus may consider a sufficient ground—how to do this with honour I cannot see. I should have thought of this before. Now the fiat is gone forth."

"But surely you might urge your daughter's disinclination—that is, in case any such should exist."

"You are right," said the count, joyfully; "that I can do both in honour and justice to all parties, for it was a clause I always insisted upon; and I am pretty certain that Isabel, when left to follow the bent of her own inclination, will prefer her father's home to any other that may be offered her."

"That seems strange," mused Casembrot, as if unconscious of the presence of his illustrious patron. "But," he continued in a louder key, "should the prince and his brothers ever form, as seems likely, a party against the king, and free the country of the Inquisition, and should circumstances as well as choice eventually bind you to the same course, then would this alliance secure, at Dillenburg, a safe home and a fitting one for your family—especially for Lady Isabel—during the commotion."

"Never!" exclaimed the count, with emphasis—"never! Should matters come to such a crisis—which I hope and trust they may not—never shall the enemies of the king be my friends and allies! Let others swerve and waver as they may, my course has been traced throughout these unhappy dissensions. Philip shall not make me a tool of persecution, nor shall any faction whatever make me forget what I owe to him."

"If that be your final resolution," said Casembrot, "you had better at once throw up all concern in public matters, and withdraw to the safe and pleasant shades of domestic retirement."

"I own I do not understand you, Casembrot; when I would have abstained from coming this time to Brussels, it was you who argued—who pressed the point."

"Because I had hoped, and fancied—it matters not what."

"Nay, I seek not to know it," said the count, dryly. "But time is wearing apace—you look very fatigued, Casembrot; I have been unconscionably egotistical in pressing upon you so long and so serious a conference. When my ladies arrive our spirits will become lighter. Without them this palace is dull indeed. I will now leave you, in order that you may seek repose."

Chapter XVI.

A few days subsequent to the conversation between Egmont and his secretary, the countess and her daughter arrived in town in accordance with her husband's desire, to whom the mere knowledge that they breathed under the same roof with himself was a comfort, and a few hours, after the pressure of affairs, spent in their society, a solace, which he would not have renounced under any circumstances. Yet it was but at rare intervals that he could enjoy the pure pleasures of his domestic circle. The agitation of the princess made council succeed council; and when Egmont had fulfilled his arduous duties at the palace, his friends still claimed his presence at their more private, but no less stormy discussions.

Not so with Casembrot. His delicate state of health was an apology for his confining himself completely to the house, and his patron had fulfilled his promise of making his enforced seclusion cheerful. Indeed, nothing could exceed the soothing attentions of the ladies of the family towards him. Although he well knew that this line of conduct was not quite spontaneous on their part, yet the gentle Isabel, and even the proud Sabina of Bavaria herself, threw over all their actions a grace of kindness that seemed to come from the heart, and accordingly found an echo in his own. He to whom for years the heart of the chief of this numerous

family had been open without reserve, and whose influence over him, however unobtrusive, was acknowledged, could not but be looked upon as one of its members; and his endearing qualities, and habit, that strongest of ties, had made him one of general esteem and love. Thus his subordinate situation was more overlooked by others, and less felt by himself, than might have been imagined.

He had at all times an easy access to the countess's apartments; but since her return from Purmerend, without any intrusive familiarity, which he would have been the last man to offer, and Sabina of Bavaria the last lady to endure, he might be said to have made them, in some measure, his own.

Within the limits of a small circular chamber (we should not now dignify it with a more pompous denomination than a closet), whose solitary bow window, so deep as to form a sort of second cabinet, overlooked the then large park appertaining to the mansion, the princess whiled away the hours which her own desire, and the season that detained most ladies of her rank in their castles in the country, made solitary.

Here she would employ herself upon some rich embroideries on which, also, not only her daughter, but her ladies busied their fingers. The chaplain, to pass away the time, would read, or talk of holy things, and Casembrot cheer them with his varied but, at all times, interesting conversation; or peruse, for their amusement, some one of those ponderous volumes of chivalric romance and lazy rhyme, which the taste of that day favoured. To vary these occupations, one of the ladies might, perchance, recount a tale, or Isabel sing, or when the countess was herself in a pleasant humour, she would, as much for her own satisfaction as for that of her listeners, dwell on the details of her brilliant espousals at Spire, which the emperor graced with his presence, and dilate on the remembrances of the home and friends of early days, or, perhaps, on the still dearer and more exciting theme of her husband's victories. Although probably the ear of Isabel was familiar with each and all of these reminiscences they never fell unheeded, and whenever her father was mentioned the glow of filial pride was on her cheek, the smile of filial love played on her lip.

Such was the calm manner in which the hours of convalescence passed for Casembrot—but too lightly, too pleasantly—perhaps his mind was but in too great danger of becoming enfeebled by the very repose that restored the wonted vigour to his frame. It might be that some fear of this nature would occasionally force itself upon his mind, and cause the sudden start, the involuntary exclamation, which Isabel, construing into the expression of bodily pain, would hasten to soothe away with her smile or solicitous inquiries.

The little chamber we have described had become so familiar to Casembrot in the course of a few happy days, that he would linger there even when more active duties, or other chances, caused it to be deserted by its fair tenants.

One afternoon he was left to his solitary reflections longer than usual. The count was absent. The ladies he knew he was not likely to see until the evening repast would again reunite them; yet he could not refrain from visiting the loved little room which, however cheerless in its unoccupied state, still seemed to him less lonely than any other in the house. He passed there several listless hours; still time hung not heavily upon his

hands. He had been luxuriating in a pensive yet agreeable mood. His reviving strength had permitted, or rather prompted, his imagination to dwell on a thousand fancies, such as, it is generally believed, youth alone can indulge in; but those who have recovered from a great prostration of strength, oftentimes experience that the first impulses of recovered health bring youth to the heart as well as to the pulse. Reality has not yet resumed its iron sway—renewed and coming vigour flows in a warm tide to the head and heart, brightening the one and cheering the other, until it nerves the arm with its wonted energy, and runs in even streams throughout the system.

Casembrot was revelling in that spring-like mood of convalescence. His fancy threw a peculiar charm over all things. He gazed in lounging idleness over the large framework before which the tabouret stood, displaying proudly the deep gold fringe which the rich folds of the ladies' dresses generally concealed, and smiled at the fresh roses on the canvas, as though each reminded him of some dear face. He picked up carefully a little branch of box-wood which lay by the side of the richest and lowest of these settees, and gazing on it as if it had been a treasure, he lost himself in the softest, and apparently vaguest, of reveries. How long it may have lasted he must have been perfectly unconscious, for it was the early sunset of an April sky that awoke him from his abstraction. He rose from the chair of state of the countess, into which he had thoughtlessly flung himself, and turned into the recess formed by the window, to gaze on the mellow tints which the clouds reflected.

He was about to retire to his own apartment, when a light step, stealing behind him, made him start. His ear had not caught the sound until it was close to him. He hurriedly concealed the little twig of box within the folds of his vest; but his very brow flushed when, on turning round, he beheld, close beside him, Lady Isabel.

Despite the rigorous etiquette of those times it was impossible, whilst dwelling for years under the same roof, that they should not often have met alone, nor had he ever felt it embarrassing until this evening; but, whatever the motive for this new and strange state of feeling, he could not struggle with it so successfully but that it must have become visible, even to one so inexperienced as Isabel. She seemed, however, in no way infected by it; for her inquiry how he had managed to pass the live-long day without them, was accompanied by a gay laugh that rather tended to increase than diminish his confusion.

"I must learn to fall back on my own resources," answered Casembrot, with a slight sigh, "for the time is now fast approaching when I shall have no excuse left for devoting to recreation those hours which sterner occupations ought to fill up. I shall find the change hard at first, doubtless; and, perhaps, it had been better never to have accustomed myself to pleasures which I must now resign."

"Surely you would not wish to change your active life for a page's idleness?" said Isabel, who seemed by no means inclined to give up the conversation.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Casembrot. "No, I shall be glad, indeed, to resume the duties that bind me to reality. To dream away existence thus were dangerous. The mind yields but too easily to the repose of the frame, and a thousand visions rise up around one, as wild, as capricious, and as flitting as the clouds that obscure heaven—like them,

liable to be dispelled at every moment. Far better never to dream than to awake from imaginary bliss!"

Isabel was silent for a moment, then said, in her peculiarly soft manner—

"I do not agree with you. I consider each happy fancy, each gay hope, however idle the one and fallacious the other, part and parcel of our earthly happiness; and they who can surround themselves with a world of bright visions, however improbable their realisation, enjoy a portion of happiness unknown to duller minds. Besides, as my old nurse used to say, 'To think of good things brings them to pass.'"

"Deceive not yourself with so false a philosophy," replied Casembrot, with a mournful smile, "and seek not to mislead me. Alas! he who sets his heart on impossibilities, if he would not break that heart, must not teach himself to think them probable, but struggle manfully against the folly of his imagining—to yield to them is voluntarily sealing his own fate."

"Do you think one can escape it?" asked Isabel, with a gaze so fixed, that it was evident his words had turned her thoughts from himself to subjects that lay concealed within her own bosom.

"I cannot!" murmured Casembrot, to himself, rather than in answer to the words of Isabel. "For the strength that I would give worlds to possess—that strength which I feel to be man's dignity and worth—that strength, I have it not! I cannot hope; and yet I know not how to renounce."

There was a moment's pause. Casembrot's ardent gaze was fixed on Isabel; but she seemed unconscious of the fact; for the long dark lashes that fringed her deep, blue eyes, did not shade their brightness. She looked calmly, steadily, almost mournfully, in his face for a time, then said—

"Whatever may be your sorrows, believe me I feel for you most sincerely. But every one, I find by sad experience, must have their troubles in this world!"

"Surely yours, lady, cannot yet have begun?"

"Speak not thus, Casembrot; you know as well, if not better than I do, that changes in my own happy fate are in contemplation. Perhaps you yourself have advised the very measures I allude to; if you have not actually suggested them, at any rate you must be too well aware of their import to render your silence of much avail. You cannot deceive me. Why not be as frank as I am? I would not," she continued, crimsoning under the contrary impulses of her natural timidity and depth of feeling; —"I myself would not have brought forward such a subject, but that I knew you could not be ignorant of it. What, still silent?"

"What can I—what ought I to say?" replied Casembrot, with some embarrassment; "you state the truth so far."

"Well," she continued, "I am glad you acknowledge thus much. Now, I will ask you how it happens that I have lost so much of your friendship, that you seem to take no interest whatever in an affair of such deep importance to me—that you do not even think it worth your while to advise me, or to give me your opinion."

"What poor advice I had to offer has been freely given to the count, your father," replied Casembrot, in his usual grave and distant manner.

"How changed you or I must be, Casembrot," said Isabel, gazing

earnestly into his face. "A few years back how different you were—listening so patiently to all my childish griefs and joys—always protecting me against my impetuous brothers—instructing me in so many things I loved to learn, which no one, either at the convent I left so early, nor even at home, dreamed of teaching me! How you would delight in telling me of the bright stars above us, and their possible influence over our fates—of the hidden virtues of plants and stones—of the meaning of everything in nature; until I learned to love all things around me! Never would the equerry have overcome my childish fears had it not been for your help and care. You taught me to follow the hunters' horn and the baying hounds. For years have I thought what you bid me think; and now, suddenly, your counsel, your friendship, are withdrawn from me! Is all the past, then, forgotten?"

She uttered these words with the touching accent and look of helpless infancy; but Casembrot, with a strong effort, steeled himself against them, and said, in as cold a tone as he could assume—

"The change you speak of, Lady Isabel, is in yourself. You are gradually leaving childhood, its pleasures, and its thoughtlessness behind you; and the dignity, as well as the cares, of womanhood ought now to surround you."

Isabel felt the rebuke, for her pale cheek was crimsoned in an instant with the tell-tale blood, and she replied, rather hurriedly, "I consider myself still a child, and wish others would do so; for it were not fair to deprive me, in any way, of the kindness and indulgence to which I have been so long accustomed. I know nothing of the world; nor do I wish to know it—for many years at least. And does not ignorance of its ways preserve a lengthened childhood? You have so often said this that I have taught myself to believe it."

"I still think so; but time, like the tides of the sea, tarries for no man, and life's cares carry us along whether we will or not. Nor ought we, perhaps, to seek to withdraw ourselves from the current."

"I agree with you when we are able or fitting to struggle with life and its trials; but surely, Casembrot, there are some beings in this world whom Nature seems to except from that general law, and by bestowing on them no strength to endure, marks them as those to whom she would spare all conflict. Of these I fancy myself one."

"Who can tell, lady, what is fittest for us here below? That is a point too important for frail mortals to decide upon."

"And yet I cannot help fancying in the more thoughtful moods that have of late come over me, that a secret voice in every bosom tells what is fittest for one, and that, if oftener listened to and obeyed, each mortal might, perhaps, have it in his power to save himself from many a pang."

"Alas! it is by following blindly the dictates of our own hearts, that we make woes unto ourselves. But what can your young wisdom, Lady Isabel, suggest about your own path of life? You appear to have thought much lately on topics which I should have fancied farthest from your mind."

"And probably they would long have remained so had you not, with so rough a hand, disturbed my unconsciousness. There I was, all happiness in my own dear home, seeking and dreaming of nothing beyond its limits, bounding all idea of change to occasional visits to some of our fair

castles—of pleasure to a grand hunt with the princess, and hoping that years would thus pass by unnumbered by me, unmarked by pain or joy, except as my father's absence might bring the one, or his safe return ensure the other. I was all trust in him and in you, when I am awakened from my placid happiness by the sudden, and to me most new, thought, that I am not expected, not desired, to fill my place here for ever. My beloved father—my mother told me this—and you, too, Casembrot, have thought so. They have informed me that my brothers and sisters would in time expect to see me flit to another home. It is most unkind—most unjust. I am but seventeen, and have not been so long among my friends that they should already wish me away."

As Isabel concluded these words, her eyes were clouded with tears, and her voice faltered.

Casembrot was deeply moved. He had neither sought, nor wished to have that innocent young heart laid bare before him, and as he listened to her words, he felt as if he were usurping a right not his own; yet the strong impulse of natural feeling hurried him away, in spite of his better resolutions.

"You need not go from us if you do not wish," he whispered, almost unconsciously, as he bent towards Isabel, in tones so low and choked, that it required an attentive ear to catch them. She evidently had done so, however; for, turning her tearful eyes upon him, she said, in a more cheerful voice—

"No, I will not go! I will never leave the dear home and the friends I love."

"Never," said Casembrot, recovering from the temporary emotion he had involuntarily betrayed, "is a word to be used cautiously, especially in early youth."

"Well, then, I will say to satisfy you, not now; not for—for——" she hesitated, and slightly coloured.

"Not for Count Louis of Nassau," said Casembrot, filling up the pause.

"I did not exactly mean that," replied Isabel, with a still deeper blush, and with an evident effort. "It is not him especially that I would reject—I do not wish ever to marry. I have been anxious for some time to tell you this, that you might impress it on my father's mind. You can do so much better than I, and thus spare me, for the future, I will not say discussions—for my father's kindness to me is angelic—but the pain of refusing anything that one so beloved may ask. Oh! shield me from the repetition of such useless grief. I know you have the power if you will but exert it."

Casembrot was much affected by the pleading look, the smile of trust with which this appeal was made; and it was with no steady voice that he replied—

"Flattered as I feel by your confidence, Lady Isabel, it is my duty to point out how much more pleased the count, your father, would be to hear your sentiments from your own lips; surely his tenderness deserves all trust."

"Perhaps you are right—I feel that you are so," said Isabel; "but I cannot tell you how, in spite of my warm, devoted, enthusiastic love for my father, my affection and respect for my dear mother, I feel timid even to nervousness in their presence. The very admiration which I feel for

them checks the flow of my confidence. My heart would tell, but my lips cannot. They would not chide, but they would not understand me. My wild, gay brothers would ridicule me were I to speak my thoughts; even my little sisters, as they grow, will be different, very different from me—even now they are buoyant and bold as I never was. No, until now I never found any one who would, or could, enter into my fancies and ways but you, Casembrot, and you too, I see, are fast changing."

Casembrot coloured painfully under the young girl's reproachful gaze, and replied with some embarrassment that his feelings neither would nor could ever change, however much circumstances might alter his mode of expressing them.

"But," urged Isabel, "I would have nothing altered between us. I would that all should remain as formerly—I, the attentive, docile pupil; and you, the patient guide. You know the title I once conferred upon you in play. Well, keep it to the end—be still my father-confessor, as you have been, especially to-day. Now your absolution, kind father, and I shall inflict upon you no more at present; but, like an obedient child, retire to my spinning-wheel."

A shade of displeasure, amounting to impatience, passed over the invalid's brow. There was something in the word *father* that grated on his ear, as a harsh trumpet of alarm might have sounded amidst a choir of angels. Father! This word, applied to him so frankly and confidently, crushed a wild, tumultuous train of hopes which Isabel's unconscious, almost caressing tenderness of voice and manner had, despite his better reason, awakened in his breast. That one word, so calmly spoken, dissipated the vague vision at once, crudely arousing him from his dream.

"Yes," said he, with a bitter smile most at variance with his usual and seemingly inborn gentleness, "I shall be too happy to be your confessor, counsellor, what you please, as long as I am your father's poor secretary. But I shall return to my estate one of these days—it wants my care—and you will marry a prince or a count at the very least, and go to a new home, and we shall, of course, forget everything we have said, or done, or even thought here!"

"God forbid!" said Isabel, warmly. "How strange, how captious you have become, Casembrot—ill-health must be the cause. But do not torment me by speaking of all the possible changes which, I know, time must bring, but which I endeavour to banish from my thoughts as much as possible. You seek in vain to frighten me," she continued, with a tearful smile. "My father will not let you go—nor my brothers—nor myself. As for me, as long as I can, I will remain under this roof; when I leave it, if I must eventually do so, then I shall exchange it for a convent. This determination is what makes me so unwilling to mix with, or to acquire any knowledge of, a world which I am resolved beforehand to renounce."

"These are idle fancies, lady, and will fade before reality one day, as the mists of morning are dissipated by the sun."

"Time will show."

"Time will show, indeed, that you must follow the current, like others."

"But I am not like others in anything; that you yourself have often allowed. Even in my childhood, I was unlike other children—more timid,

less playful; nor was I fond of learning, except from you. Books I never could endure; letters were always dead to me. But I loved the country and its lazy pleasures. To gaze on the green meadows and distant trees, or on the blue waters from our turret window, for hours together, in calm delight, or listen to the hum of distant voices—the evening song of the returning herdsman—these were my delight. I was a dreamy, indolent child, living in a little world of my own, thinking I scarce knew of what; I had thoughts that I could not frame into words. You know the gambols of other children always frightened and fatigued me. I could not run so fast as they; the least exertion seemed to tear my very heart from my bosom, and left me breathless—speechless for hours. My voice was too weak for them to heed it in their plays. Well, I now feel among grown people as I then did among children; scared by the loud gaiety of some, uninterested in the schemes, the plans, the wishes, that engross others, unable to understand the cares that agitate all around me. What seems to them so all-important, seems to me too trifling to be worth a moment's thought. I value highly what they scarce seem to notice or think of. I feel I am like a child among them. I am still true to my early tastes and feelings—loving the same things, the same beings. What should I, then, seek among those who do not understand me, and for whom I feel nothing? Every one seems striving to gain some great end, and never to enjoy quietly the happiness within reach. The world appears to me, what Madame de Parme describes it, full of strife and anger. The calm of my father's home, where all is love and smiles—or that of a convent, where all is peace—is alone fit for me. Say, Casembrot, am I not right in choosing a life of repose, since I have not the energy to embrace one of action?—You do not answer."

"Have you, then, no desire to be beloved by the world?" said Casembrot, with a downcast look; "to be admired—courted?"

"Oh, no! no!" exclaimed Isabel, shading her face with her hands. "The approach, the presence of strangers is always pain to me. To dream away my life as heretofore, none telling me of what passes in the troubled world without, is all I wish—it is all of earthly happiness that I would lay claim to."

"You would endeavour," said Casembrot, "to avoid entering upon the cares, the anxieties that make the heart weary, at times, in this chequered world; but then you must also renounce the gay hopes, the real joys, that, at others, make it a paradise to man."

"I think I am fitted to encounter neither."

"That is impossible!"

"I will try to keep my impassibility by withdrawing within myself," said Isabel, with one of her sweetest smiles.

"You cannot, lady! Your affections are too warm. Better, like me, try to steel yourself against sorrow, than hope to escape it—it will overtake you one day or another."

"It is time to leave you, my grave monitor. You are too wise, and too sad to-day—you afford me but scanty comfort. I will tell you when your forebodings come to pass. Adieu, knight of the mournful thoughts!" said she, with childish levity. "When I shall have lived as long as you, perhaps I shall have become as prophetic of evil; but I am at present too young to believe it impossible to avoid it."

These words, carelessly uttered, certainly never meant to wound, cut

deep into Casembrot's sensitive heart. A conviction presented itself to his mind which, however harrowing to his secret feelings, was too clear to be repulsed. All her thoughts had passed in review before his inquisitorial eye. No! he was not loved, as at one moment he had madly fancied. Whereas love makes the bold, the confident, the assuming, bashful in the presence of the beloved object, friendship alone, that calmest of feelings, could lend courage and confidence to one so shy and retiring as Isabel. Where was the downcast eye, the fear, the modesty of love? Hers was the openness, the simplicity, of a heart that, towards him at least, had no secret, no disguise. How could he, in his wildest flight of imagination, have dreamed that the daughter of the great, the noble Count of Egmont, head of a house no less illustrious by an antique and princely descent than by splendid alliances and immense wealth, could throw her eyes on a simple *gentilhomme*, whose race, though ancient too, had never stood sufficiently high to claim such a distinction, even had not his own want of wealth and position opposed an obvious obstacle.

And was it not enough that he should suffer in having permitted his own ardent affections to become fixed on an unattainable object, without desiring another, and that other a frail, a delicate, and a beloved being, to struggle with the same feelings, to endure the same pang of hopelessness? It was an ungenerous, unmanly desire; yet Casembrot could not help experiencing all the bitterness of disappointment, as he felt that every instant rivetted more closely the chain which he was destined to bear alone.

Isabel checked the strain of pleasantry in which she had last spoken; for, overcome by the conflict of opposing emotions, and the latent weakness of ill-health, Casembrot sank into a chair, and, hiding his face with his hands, wept like a child. She saw his distress without understanding its cause, and tried, though in vain, to soothe him by her kind solicitation. He repeated, in inarticulate accents, that ill-health alone caused this strange and unaccountable fit of despondency, and pleaded fatigue as an excuse for withdrawing from her presence.

When he entered his chamber, he gave way to his grief with a weakness against which all struggle was unavailing. He became then, for the first time, aware that the hopeless attachment, which he had yet fancied in its infancy, was an overgrown passion that would demand every energy of his soul to uproot. And had he that moral energy—that strength which alone raises man above all other created things, and elevates him even above woman's gentle resignation? Alas! he dared scarcely answer this question to his own bosom.

SIR EGLAMOUR.

A FRAGMENT.

Has the reader ever observed, in studying Shakspeare, the power of that first of poets in investing his subordinate characters with a charm, an impressive influence, such as no other dramatist confers, at least in anything like the same degree? Other authors are commonly satisfied if they can interest us in two or three leading personages—to whose sayings and doings the sayings and doings of the lesser agents are mere mechanical adaptations. But Shakspeare gives to each an individuality which breathes a *noli me tangere*—an idiosyncrasy, a proper vitality of his own. The subordinate is not merely a supernumerary. The "walking gentleman" is not simply a stalking-horse. He is not modestly merged in the glory of the great man of the piece, but has a will of his own—instincts, habits, tastes, and a real personal history. He may be introduced in order to aid in the evolution of the central idea, to affect the development of the drama, and to elucidate the destiny of its hero; but Shakspeare rewards him for his services by drawing attention to his individual life; so that he is not merely relatively, but he is absolutely, an object of regard. While other writers make the subordinate a kind of sign-post—pointing the way—itself a naked piece of wood, hastily planed by the carpenter, and smeared over with white paint—Shakspeare lavishes art and ornament on *his* sign-post, makes it of polished marble instead of painted wood, carves it with the ease and finish of a master, and so perfects the appearance of the thing that we not only glance at it to read the direction, but pause to admire the cunning workmanship of the monument itself.

As an illustration, take *Sir Eglamour* in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona." This chivalric personage utters, in the course of the five acts—how many lines? About five-and-twenty. Yet he becomes familiar to us, interests us in his behalf, and secures our respect and esteem, our confidence, our heart. The *rôle* he plays is but that of a Mr. Great-heart to poor pilgrimising *Sylvia*, in her flight from Milan and perjured *Proteus* to Mantua and exiled *Valentine*. *Sir Eglamour* is a gentleman, "valiant, wise, remorseful, well-accomplished." He has had his sorrows, and they have chastened and refined him, and have made him the gentle and sympathising man in whose simple story we find such a charm. He has loved; but only to see the desire of his eyes taken away with a stroke. Poor *Thekla*, in Schiller's "Wallenstein," sings mournfully and very sweetly,—

> Du Heilige, rufe dein Kind zurück,
> Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,
> Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.

And so has *Sir Eglamour* lived and loved—*gelebt und geliebet*. Hear *Lady Sylvia*:—

> Thyself hast lov'd; and I have heard thee say,
> No grief did ever come so near thy heart,
> As when thy lady and thy true love died,
> Upon whose grave thou vow'dst pure chastity.

His life has corresponded to his vow; it has been spiritualised by the constant presence of an angelic form, to the music of whose mystic whisperings ("in memoriam") every chord of his heart has long since vibrated responsively, with the harmonies of undying love. He has that in his mien whereon noble hearts would implicitly rely. And therefore the noble Milanese maiden, intent on a perilous enterprise, relies on him, and commits her honour to his keeping—she another Una, and he another Red Cross Knight. *Hamlet* will take the *Ghost's* word for a thousand pounds; *Sylvia* has profounder confidence still in the trustworthiness of her knightly guide:—

> Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine,
> To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode;
> And, for the ways are dangerous to pass,
> I do desire thy worthy company,
> Upon whose faith and honour I repose.

She desires it from a heart as full of sorrows as the sea of sands. He pities much her grievances, and knowing they are traceable to virtue, and that it is no vulgar elopement which is proposed to him, and to which he is summoned as coadjutor, and that it is no giddy hoyden, but one of womanhood's finest ideals whom he is asked to succour, he gives consent to go along with her—

> Recking as little what betideth me,
> As much I wish all good befortune you.
> When will you go?
> *Syl.*— This evening coming.
> *Egl.*—Where shall I meet you?
> *Syl.*— At friar Patrick's cell,
> Where I intend holy confession.
> *Egl.*—I will not fail, your ladyship:
> Good morrow, gentle lady.
> *Syl.*—Good morrow, kind Sir Eglamour.

Soon as the sun begins to gild the western sky, "kind *Sir Eglamour*" is at the abbey where the rendezvous is appointed.

> And now it is about the very hour
> That Sylvia, at Patrick's cell, should meet me.
> She will not fail—for lovers break not hours,
> Unless it be to come before their time;
> So much they spur their expedition.
> * * * See, where she comes—Lady, a happy evening!

What a grace and dignity—or, if you like Hendiadys better, what a gracious dignity—about the lady and her escort! How *Valentine* is indebted to that man, the preserver of his betrothed from a "most unhappy match," fleeing with her along the "rising of the mountain foot that leads to Mantua." At her bidding the chevalier leads the way, "out at the postern by the abbey wall," soothing her apprehension of spies by reminding her how near is the forest, which once reached, they will be safe, shaded in umbrageous concealment from the evil eye of malign pursuit. There they are seen, and the news is soon conveyed to Milan—

> 'Tis true; for friar Lawrence met them both,
> As he in penance wandered through the forest:

there they are troubled by a thousand mischances, and sundered in that

"shadowy desert" and those "unfrequented woods" where robbers hide, making their will their law.

Shakspeare—master of the hearts of men!—why didst thou not tell us, by one line, as thou only couldst, the after-history of this Fidelio? Why not bring him once again upon the stage, if only to re-unite him honourably and happily to the heroes and heroines, instead of leaving him as thou *hast* left him—where? Alas! running from the outlaws, and, "being nimble-footed," *out*-running them.

Really, it is a little vexatious to part with so excellent a gentleman as *Sir Eglamour* in such an attitude as *that*—allowing him, for all we know, to be at this instant perambulating Northern Italy with the intensity of the "Steam-Leg" and the endurance of the Wandering Jew. It serves to put us, as well as the knight-*courant*, out of breath. It is as if Shakspeare (we are going to swerve from orthodoxy a little) had painted an exquisite miniature—perfect as far as it goes, but—unfinished, some would even say, terminating in a daub. One is reminded of a mermaid, or something of that genus—in the upper premises "beautiful exceedingly" —but decidedly fishy and objectionable in the lower story. But this is heresy—and there, the least said is soonest mended.

SUMMER, GOOD-BYE.

BY J. ANTHONY, JUN.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—I bid thee adieu,
For the leaves of the forest are faded and few,
And the breath of old Winter hath silvered the spray,
And night is fast creeping on beautiful day.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—in woodland and dell
The flowerets have bid thee for ever farewell:
The smile of thy coming their race may restore,
But they, dearest Summer, will meet thee no more.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—our parting doth seem
To me as the close of a beautiful dream,
Which Fancy hath wreathed in radiance so bright,
And broken her spell in the darkness of night.

Farewell, oh farewell, then, an thou wilt away,
I ask not why hurry, or bid thee to stay,
Nor vainly repine—chilly Winter must reign,
But hope, dearest Summer, to meet thee again.

Good-bye to thee, Summer!—I bid thee adieu,
For the leaves of the forest are faded and few,
And the breath of old Winter hath silvered the spray,
And night is fast creeping on beautiful day.

THE BLIND SISTER.

By Dr. Borax,

AUTHOR OF "A TALE OF MESMERISM," ETC.

For real comfort, snugness, and often rural beauty, where are there in the wide world any dwellings that can equal the cottage homes of England's middle classes? Whether they be clad with ivy and woodbine, half hidden by forest-trees, and approached by silent, shady lanes, or, glaring with stucco and green paint, stand perched upon flights of steps, by the side of dusty suburban roads,—whether they be cockney-christened with fine titles, and dignified as villas, halls, or lodges, or rejoice in such sweet names as Oak Cottage or Linden Grove,—still within their humble walls, before all other places, are to be found content, and peace, and pure domestic love.

Upon the slope of a gentle hill, about a mile from a large town, where I was attending to the practice of an absent friend, there stood a neat and pretty residence, with slated roof and trellised porch. A light verandah shaded the narrow French windows, opening from the favourite drawing-room upon a trim, smooth lawn, studded with gay parterres, and bounded by a sweet-briar hedge; and here old Mrs. Reed, the widow of a clergyman, was busily employed, one lovely autumn afternoon, peering through her spectacles at the fast-fading flowers, or plucking from some favourite shrub the "sear and yellow leaf" that spoke of the summer passed away, and the dreary season hurrying on apace. Her daughter, a pale and delicate-looking girl, sat with her drooping head leant against the open window-frame, watching her mother sorrowfully as she felt her own declining health, and thought how her parent's waning years might pass away, uncared for, and unsolaced by a daughter's love. Within the room, a young man was reclining lazily upon a sofa; rather handsome, about the middle height, *but* had it not been for a stubby moustache, very long hair, and his rather slovenly costume—peculiarities which he considered indispensable to his profession as an artist—there was nothing in his appearance to distinguish him from the generality of young English gentlemen of his age and station. Presently there fell upon his ear the notes of a beautiful symphony, played with most exquisite taste upon the harp, and gradually blending with a woman's voice, deep, soft, and tremulous, every now and then, as if with intense feeling, in one of those elaborate yet enervating melodies that have their birth in sunny Italy. The performer was about twenty-five years of age, of haughty and dazzling beauty. Her dark wavy hair, gathered behind into a large glossy knot, was decked on one side with a bunch of pink rose-buds. A full white robe, that covered, without hiding, the outline of her bust and arms, was bound at the waist with a thick cord and tassel of black silk and gold, adding all that dress could add to the elegance of her tall and splendid figure. Then, as she rose and stretched out her jewelled hand to tighten a loose string, the ineffable grace of the studied attitude in which she stood for some moments showed her to be well skilled in those fascinating arts that so often captivate the senses before the heart is touched.

This lady was the daughter of Mrs. Reed's only sister, who in her

youth had run away with an Italian music-master. Signor Arnatti, although a poor adventurer, was not quite devoid of honour, for, when first married, he really loved his English wife, and proudly introduced her to his friends at Florence, where her rank and fortune were made much of, and she was caressed and fêted until half wild with pleasure and excitement. But this was not to last. Her husband, a man of violent and ungovernable temper, was heard to utter certain obnoxious political opinions; and it being discovered that he was connected with a dangerous conspiracy against the existing government, a speedy flight alone saved him from the scaffold or perpetual imprisonment. They sought a temporary home in Paris, where, after dissipating much of their little fortune at the gambling-table, he met with a sudden and violent death in a night-brawl, just in time to save his wife and child from poverty. The young widow, who of late had thought more of her infant than its father, was not long inconsolable. Discarded by her own relations, who, with bitter and cruel taunts, had refused all communication with her, and now too proud to return to them again, she settled with her little girl in Italy, where a small income enabled her to lead a life of unrestrained gaiety, that soon became almost necessary to her existence. Here young Catherine was reared and educated, flattered and spoiled, by all about her; and encouraged by her vain mother to expect nothing less than an alliance with high rank and wealth, she refused many advantageous offers of marriage, and ere long gained the character of a heartless and unprincipled coquette, especially among the English visitors, who constituted a great part of the society in which she moved. Her mother corresponded occasionally with Mrs. Reed; and the sisters still cherished an affection for each other, which increased as they advanced in years; but their ideas, their views, even their religion was different, and the letters they exchanged once, or at most twice a year, afforded but little satisfaction to either. When the cholera visited Italy, Madame Arnatti was seized with a presentiment that fate had already numbered her among its victims, and, under the influence of this feeling, wrote a long and touching letter to her sister, freely confessing the sin and folly of her conduct in regard to her daughter's management, of whom she gave a long description, softened, it is true, by a mother's hand, yet containing many painful truths, that must have caused the doting parent infinite sorrow to utter. She concluded by repeating her conviction that her end was near, and consigning Catherine to her sister's care, with an entreaty that she would take her from the immoral and polluted atmosphere in which they lived, and try the effect of her piety, and kindness, and steady English habits on the young woman's violent and ungovernable passions. Months passed away, and then Mrs. Reed received a letter from Catherine herself, telling of her mother's death; also one from a lady, in whose company she was travelling homeward, in accordance with her mother's dying wish. Another long interval elapsed, and the good lady was preparing to visit London, for the purpose of consulting an eminent physician on her daughter's state of health, when news reached the cottage of Miss Arnatti's arrival in that city, which had been retarded thus long by tedious quarantine laws, illness, and other causes.

Her guardian was apparently glad enough to get rid of the charge she had undertaken, and within a week Catherine removed to her aunt's

lodgings, where she was received and treated with every affectionate attention; but a constant yearning after gaiety and amusements, indelicate and unfeeling as it appeared to her relatives, so soon after the loss of an only parent; the freedom and boldness of her manners when in company or in public, and her overbearing conduct to those about her, augured but little in favour of such an addition to their circle. However, the good aunt hoped for better things from the removal to her quiet country-home. Their stay in London was even shorter than they had intended, and, for some time after their return to the cottage, Miss Arnatti endeavoured to adapt herself to the habits that must have been so strange and new to her; she even sought, and made herself agreeable in, the very orderly but cheerful society where her aunt and cousin introduced her, although Annie Reed's increasing weakness prevented them from receiving much company at their own house.

Edwin Reed, Catherine's other cousin, was absent on a tour in Wales, and had only returned a few days previous to the afternoon on which we have described him as listening, enraptured, to the lady's native music. Seating herself at the piano, she followed this by a brilliant waltz, the merry, sparkling notes of which made the eye brighten and the brain whirl, from very sympathy; and then returning to her favourite instrument, she sang, to a low, plaintive accompaniment, a simple English ballad, telling of man's heartlessness, and woman's frailty and despair. The last verse ran :—

So faith and hope her soul forsaking,
Each day to heavier sorrow waking,
This cruel love her heart was breaking;
Yet, ere her breath
Was hushed in death,
She breathed a prayer
For her betrayer—
Angels to heaven her poor soul taking.

Scarcely had she finished, when, as if in thorough contempt of the maiden's weakness, she drew her hand violently across the strings with a discordant crash, that startled poor little Annie painfully, and pushing the harp from her with an impatient gesture, abruptly quitted the room.

The old lady had gone in to enjoy a gossip with her next-door neighbour, and so the brother and sister were alone. The signs of tears were on the latter's cheek as Edwin approached and sat down by her side; attributing this to her extreme sensibility wrought upon by what they had just heard, he spoke some kind and cheering words, and then began to talk enthusiastically of their cousin's beauty and accomplishments. She listened to him quietly for some time, and then,

"Dear brother," she said, timidly, "you must forgive me for what I am about to say, when it is to warn and caution you against those very charms that have already made such an impression on you. I am not one, Edwin, as you know, to speak ill, even of my enemies, if such there be; and to any other but yourself would hide her faults, and try to think of some pleasing trait on which to dwell, when her name was mentioned. Nay, do not interrupt me, for, rest assured, I am only prompted by a sister's love. I have seen much of Catherine, and heard more; I fear her dreadful temper—her different faith; although, indeed, she seems to neglect all religious duties, even those of her own church. Then I think of her rudeness and inattention to our dear mother, who is so kind and

gentle to her. Had you been in London when we first met, you would not wonder at our being shocked and pained at all we witnessed there."

"But, Annie, dear," said her brother, "why should you talk thus earnestly to me? Surely I may admire and praise a handsome woman, without falling hopelessly in love."

"You may, or you may not," continued Annie, warmly. "But this I know and feel, that, unless she were to change in every manner, thought, and action, she is the last person in the world that I would see possess a hold upon my brother's heart. Why, do you know, she makes a boast of the many lovers she has encouraged and discarded; and even shows, with ill-timed jests, letters from her admirers, containing protestations of affection, and sentiments that any woman of common feeling would at least consider sacred."

"And have you nothing, then, to say in her favour?" said young Reed, quietly. "Can you make no allowance for the manner in which she has been brought up? or, may she never change from what you represent her?"

"She may, perhaps; but let me beg of you, Edwin, to pause, and think, and not be infatuated and led away, against your better judgment, as so many have already been."

"Why, my dear sister," he replied, "if we were on the point of running off together, you could not be more earnest in the matter; but I have really never entertained such thoughts as you suggest, and if I did, should consider myself quite at liberty to act as I pleased, whether I were guided by your counsel or not."

"Well, Edwin, be not angry with me; perhaps I have spoken too strongly on the subject. You know how much I have your happiness at heart, and this it is that makes me say so much. I often think I have not long to live, but while I am here would have you promise me ——"

A chilly breeze swept over the lawn, and the invalid was seized with a violent fit of coughing; her brother shut the casement, and wrapped the shawl closer round her slight figure. Mrs. Reed entered the room at the same instant, and their conversation ended.

Catherine Arnatti was in her own chamber, the open window of which was within a few yards of where her cousins had been talking. Attracted thither by the sound, she listened intently, and leaning out, apparently employed in training the branches of a creeping plant, she had heard every word they uttered.

The winter passed away pleasantly enough, for two at least of the party at the cottage.

Catherine and Edwin were of necessity thrown much together; she sat to him as a model, accompanied him in his walks, and flattered him by innumerable little attentions, that were unnoticed by the others; but still her conduct to his mother and sister, although seemingly more kind of late, was insincere, and marked by a want of sympathy and affection, that often grieved him deeply. Her temper she managed to control, but sometimes not without efforts on her part that were more painful to witness than her previous outbreaks of passion. Six months had elapsed since Miss Arnatti had overheard, with feelings of hatred towards one, and thorough contempt of both speakers, the dialogue in which her faults had been so freely exposed. Yet she fully expected that young Reed would soon be at her feet, a humble follower, as other men had been; but although polite, attentive, and ever seeking her society, he still forbore to

speak of love, and then, piqued and angry at his conduct, she used every means to gain his affection, without at first any real motive for so doing; soon, however, this wayward lady began to fancy that the passion she would only feign was really felt—and being so unexpectedly thwarted gave strength to this idea—and in proportion also grew her hatred towards Miss Reed, to whose influence she attributed her own failure. Before long she resolved that Edwin *should* be her husband, by which means her revenge on Annie would be gratified, and a tolerable position in the world obtained for herself, for she had ascertained that the young man's fortune, although at present moderate, was yet sufficient to commence with, and that his prospects and expectations were nearly all that could be desired.

Neither was Edwin altogether proof against her matchless beauty. At times he felt an almost irresistible impulse to kneel before her, and avow himself a slave for ever, and as often would some hasty word or uncongenial sentiment turn his thoughts into another channel; and then they carried him away to an old country seat in Wales, where he had spent the summer of last year on a visit to some friends of his family. A young lady, of good birth and education, resided there as governess to some half-dozen wild and turbulent children. Her kind and unobtrusive manners and gentle voice first attracted his attention towards her; and although perhaps not handsome, her pale sweet face and dark blue eye made an impression that deepened each day as he discovered fresh beauties in her intellectual and superior mind. After an acquaintance of some months he made an offer of his hand, and her conduct on this occasion only confirmed the ardent affection he entertained for her. Candidly admitting that she could joyfully unite her lot with his, she told her previous history, and begged the young man to test his feelings well before allying himself to a poor and portionless girl, and for this purpose prayed that twelve months might elapse before the subject of their marriage were renewed. She would not doubt him then; still he might see others, who would seem more worthy of his regard; but if, in that time, his sentiments were unchanged, all that she had to give was his for ever. In vain he tried to alter this resolution; her arguments were stronger than his own, and so at last, with renewed vows of fidelity, he reluctantly bade her farewell. For various reasons he had kept this attachment a secret from his family, not altogether sure of the light in which they might view it; and the position of the young governess would have been rendered doubly painful, had those under whose roof she dwelt been made acquainted with the circumstances. Although fully aware in cooler moments that, even had he known no other, his cousin Catherine was a person with whom, as a companion for life, he could never hope for real happiness, still he knew the danger of his situation, and resolved, not without a struggle, to tear himself away from the sphere of her attractions; and so, one evening, Edwin announced his intention of setting off next day on a walking excursion through Scotland, proposing to visit Wales on his return. Different were the feelings with which each of the ladies received this intelligence. Catherine, who had but the day before refused a pressing invitation to join a gay party, assembled at the London mansion of one of her old acquaintances, turned away and bit her lip with rage and chagrin, as Miss Reed repeated to her mother, who had grown deaf of late, over and over again to make her understand, that Edwin was about to leave them for a

time—was going to Scotland, and purposed leaving by the mail on the morrow night. She had of course no objection to offer, being but too glad to believe that nothing more than friendship existed between her son and sister's child; yet wondered much what had led to such a sudden resolution.

Catherine Arnatti never closed her eyes that night; one instant fancying that Edwin loved her, and only paused to own it for fear of a refusal, and flattering herself that he would not leave without. These thoughts gave way to bitter disappointment, hatred, and vows of revenge against him, and all connected with him, more particularly his sister, whose words she now recalled, torturing herself with the idea that Annie had extorted a promise from her brother never to wed his cousin while she lived; and the sickly girl had improved much since then, and might, after all, be restored to perfect health; then, the first time for years, she wept—cried bitterly at the thought of being separated from one against whom she had but just before been breathing threats and imprecations, and yet imagined was the only man she had ever really loved. A calmer mood succeeded, and she lay down, resolving and discarding schemes to gain her wishes, that occupied her mind till daylight.

The next day passed in busy preparations; Edwin avoiding, as he dreaded, the result of a private interview with his cousin. Towards the afternoon Miss Reed and her mother happened to be engaged with their medical attendant, who opportunely called that day, and often paid longer visits than were absolutely necessary; and Catherine, who with difficulty had restrained her emotions, seizing on the opportunity, and scarcely waiting to knock at the door, entered Edwin's apartment. He was engaged in packing a small portmanteau, and looking up, beheld her standing there, pale and agitated, more beautiful he thought than ever, and yet a combination of the angel and the fiend. Some moments passed in silence; then, advancing quickly, holding out her hand, she spoke in a husky voice:

"Edwin, I have come to bid you a farewell—if, indeed, you go to-night, in this world we shall never meet again; neither hereafter, if half that you believe is true. It sets one thinking, does it not? a parting that we feel to be for ever, from those with whom we have been in daily intercourse, even for a few short months."

"And pray, Catherine," he asked, trying to talk calmly, "why should we not meet again? Even if I were about to visit the antipodes I should look forward to return some day; indeed, it would grieve me much to think that I should never enjoy again your company, where I have spent so many pleasant hours, and of which, believe me, I shall ever cherish a grateful recollection. Be kind to poor Annie and my mother when I am gone, and if you think it not too great a task, I shall be very glad sometimes to hear the news from you, and in return will write you of my wanderings in the Highlands."

"Well, good-bye, Edwin," she repeated; "for all you say, my words may yet prove true."

But I do not go yet for some hours, and we shall meet again below before I leave; why not defer good-bye till then?"

There was another pause before she answered, with passionate energy, and grasping his arm tightly:

"And is this all you have to say? Now listen to me, Edwin; know

that I love you, and judge of its intensity by my thus owning it. I am no bashful English girl, to die a victim to concealment or suspense, but *must* and *will* know all at once. Now, tell me, sir, have I misplaced my love? Tell me, I say, and quickly, for, by the powers above, you little know how much depends upon your answer."

She felt his hand, cold and trembling; his face was even paler than her own, as, overwhelmed with confusion, Edwin stammered out—

"Really, Miss Arnatti—Catherine—I was not aware; at least, I am so taken by surprise. Give me time to think, for——"

"What, then, you hesitate," she said, stamping her foot; and then, with desperate calmness, added, in a softer tone, "Well, be it so; body and soul I offer, and you reject the gift." A violent struggle was racking the young man's breast, and, by the working of his countenance, she saw it, and paused. But still he never raised his eyes to hers, that were so fixed on him; and she continued: "You ask for time to think; oh! heaven and hell, that I should come to this! But take it, and think well; it is four hours before you quit this roof; I will be there to say adieu. Or better, perhaps, if you will write, and give at leisure the result of your deliberations."

She spoke the last words with a bitter sneer; yet Edwin caught at the suggestion, and replied:

"Yes, I will write, I promise you, within a month. Forgive my apparent coldness; forgive——"

"Hush!" interrupted Catherine; "your sister calls; why does she come here now? You will not mention what has passed, I know; remember, within a month I am to hear. Think of me kindly, and believe that I might make you love me even as I love you. Now, go to her, go before she finds you here."

Edwin pressed her hand in parting, and she bent down her forehead, but the kiss imprinted there was cold and passionless. He met his sister at the door, and led her back affectionately to the drawing-room she had just quitted.

The old gardener had deposited a portmanteau and knapsack on the very edge of the footpath by the side of the high road, and had been watching for the mail, with a great horn lantern, some half-hour or so before it was expected; while the housemaid was stationed inside the gate, upon the gravel-walk, ready to convey the intelligence, as soon as the lights were visible coming up the hill; and cook stood at the front-door, gnawing her white apron. The family were assembled in that very unpleasant state of expectation, that generally precedes the departure of a friend or relative; Edwin walking about the room, wrapped up for travelling, impatient and anxious to be off. At last, the gardener hallooed out lustily; Betty ran towards the house, as if pursued by a wild beast, and screaming, "It's a coming;" and cook, who had been standing still all the time, rushed in, quite out of breath, begging Mr. Edwin to make haste, for the coach never waited a minute for nobody; so he embraced his mother and sister; and then, taking Catherine's hand, raised it hastily, but respectfully to his lips. Miss Reed watched the movement, and saw how he avoided the piercing gaze her cousin fixed upon him, not so intently though, but that she noted the faint gleam of satisfaction that passed over Annie's pale face; and cursed her for it. Strange, that the idea of any other rival had never haunted her.

"Good-bye, once more," said Edwin. "I may return before you expect me; God bless you all!"

And, in another five minutes, he was seated by the side of the frosty old gentleman who drove the mail, puffing away vigorously at his meerschaum.

The ladies passed a dismal evening; more so, indeed, than the circumstances would seem to warrant. Annie commenced a large piece of embroidery, that, judging from its size and the slow progress made, seemed likely to afford her occupation and amusement until she became an old woman; while Mrs. Reed called to mind all the burglaries and murders that had been committed in the neighbourhood during the last twenty years; deploring their unprotected situation, discussing the propriety of having an alarm-bell hung between two of the chimney-pots, and making arrangements for the gardener to sleep on the premises for the future. Miss Arnatti never raised her head from the book over which she bent. Supper, generally their most cheerful meal, remained untouched, and, earlier than usual, they retired to their respective chambers.

For several hours, Catherine sat at her open window, looking out into the close, hazy night. The soft wind, that every now and then had rustled through the trees, or shaken dewdrops from the thick ivy clustered beneath the overhanging eaves, had died away. As the mist settled down, and a few stars peeped out just over head, a black curtain of clouds seemed to rise up from the horizon, hiding the nearest objects in impenetrable darkness. The only sounds now heard were those that told of man's vicinity, and his restlessness: the occasional rumble of a distant vehicle; the chime of bells; sometimes the echo of a human voice, in the direction of the town; the ticking of a watch, or the hard breathing of those that slept; and these fell on the ear, with strange distinctness, amid the awful stillness of nature. Presently, the clouds, that hung over a valley far away, opened horizontally for an instant, while a faint flash of lightning flickered behind, showing their cumbrous outline. In a few minutes a brighter flash in another quarter was followed by the low roll of distant thunder; and so the storm worked round, nearer and nearer, until it burst in all its fury over the hill on which the cottage stood.

Miss Reed, who from her childhood had always felt an agonising and unconquerable fear during a thunder-storm, roused from her light slumber, lay huddled up, and trembling, with her face buried in the pillow. She did not hear the door open or the footstep that approached so stealthily, before a hand was laid upon her shoulder; and starting up she recognised her cousin.

"Oh, Catherine!" she faltered, covering her eyes, "do stay with me awhile; I am so terrified—and think of Edwin, too, exposed as he must be to it."

"I *have* been thinking of him, Annie."

"But you are frightened, also, a little, are you not—with all your courage, or what made you shake so then?" said the poor girl, trying to draw her cousin nearer as flash after flash glared before her closed eyelids, and louder claps of thunder followed each at shorter intervals.

"I frightened?" replied the dauntless woman. "I frightened; and what at? Not at the thunder surely; and as for lightning, if it strikes, they say it brings a sudden and a painless death, leaving but seldom even a mark upon the corpse. Who would not prefer this, to lingering on a bed of sickness."

"Do not say so, Catherine, pray do not; only think if——O God, have mercy on us! Was not *that* awful?"

"Was it not grand? Magnificent—awful, if you will. Think of its raging and revelling uncontrolled, and striking where and what it will, without a bound or limit to its fury. And fancy such a storm pent up in the narrow compass of a human breast, and yet not bursting its frail prison. What can the torments, that they tell us of, hereafter, be to this?"

"And what reason can you have, dear cousin, for talking thus? Kneel down by me, for once, and pray; for surely, at such a time as this, if at no other, you must feel there is a God."

"No; you pray, Annie Reed, if it will comfort you; pray for us both. There, now, lie down again, and hide your face. I will stand by your side and listen to you."

She drew the slender figure gently back. Then, with a sudden movement, seizing a large pillow, dashed it over Annie's face, pressing thereon with all her strength. The long, half-smothered, piteous cry that followed, was almost unheard in the roaring of the storm that now was at its height. By the vivid light that every instant played around, she saw the violent efforts of her victim, whose limbs were moving up and down, convulsively, under the white bed-clothes. Then, throwing the whole weight of her body across the bed, she clutched and strained upon the frame, to press more heavily. Suddenly all movement ceased, and the murderess felt a short and thrilling shudder underneath her. Still, her hold never relaxed; untouched by pity or remorse, exulting in the thought that the cruel deed was nearly done, so easily, and under circumstances where no suspicion of the truth was likely to arise; dreading to look upon the dead girl's face too soon, lest the mild eyes should still be open, and beaming on her with reproach and horror.—But what was it she felt then, so warm and sticky, trickling down her arm? She knew it to be blood, even before the next flash showed the crimson stain, spreading slowly over the pillow. Again the electric fluid darted from the clouds, but this time charged with its special mission from on high. The murderess was struck! and springing up, she fell back with one shrill, wild, piercing shriek, that reached the ears of those below, before it was drowned in the din of falling masonry, and the tremendous crash that shook the house to its foundation, until the walls quivered, like the timbers of a ship beating on a rocky shore.

That night I had been to visit a patient at some distance, and finding no shelter near when returning, had ridden on through the storm. Just entering the town, I overtook a man, pressing on quickly in the same direction. Making some passing remark upon the weather, I was recognised by the old gardener, who begged me for God's sake to hurry back; the cottage, he said, was struck by lightning, and two of the ladies either dying or dead, from the injuries they had received. In a few minutes my horse was at the gate. I had just time to observe that two of the chimneys were thrown down, and some mischief done to the roof. On entering the house, I was guided, by the low wailing sound of intense grief, to an upper room, where I beheld one of those scenes that, in an instant, stamp themselves upon the memory, leaving their transfer there for ever.

Day was just breaking; a cold grey light slowly gaining strength over the yellow glare of some unsnuffed candles, while the occasional

boom of distant thunder told that the storm was not yet exhausted. Extended on a low couch, and held by the terrified servants, was the wreck of the once beautiful Catherine Arnatti; at short intervals her features became horribly distorted by an epileptic spasm, that seized one side of the body, while the other half appeared to be completely paralysed; and the unmeaning glare of the eye, when the lid was raised, told that the organ of vision was seriously injured, if not entirely destroyed. Close by, the mother bent sobbing over the helpless form of her own child, blanched and inanimate, with a streak of blood just oozing from her pallid lips. I found afterwards, that Miss Reed, in her fearful struggle, had ruptured a vessel, and, fainting from the loss of blood, had lain for some time to all appearance dead. Shortly, however, a slight fluttering over the region of the heart, and a quiver of the nostril, told that the principle of life still lingered in the shattered tenement. With the aid of gentle stimulants, she recovered sufficiently to recognise her mother; but as her gaze wandered vacantly around, it fell on the wretched and blasted creature, from whose grasp she had been so wonderfully rescued. As if some magnetic power was in that glance, Catherine rose up suddenly, despair and horror in the glassy stare she fixed on the corpse-like form before her, as, with another yell, such as burst forth when first struck by the hand of God, she relapsed into one of the most dreadful and violent paroxysms I had ever witnessed. Annie clung tightly to her mother, crying, in a faint, imploring voice, "Oh, save me—save me from her!" ere, with a heavy sigh, she once more sank into insensibility. It was not until late in the afternoon, and then only with great difficulty, that she was able to make those around her understand what had taken place, and account for the intense horror that seized upon her, when at times a groan or cry was heard from the adjoining chamber, in which Miss Arnatti lay. It became, therefore, necessary that this person should be removed, and accordingly the same night she was taken to lodgings in the town. Her conduct there was such as to induce a belief that she might be insane, and steps were taken towards placing her in a private asylum. Once only, a few days after her removal, she asked, suddenly, if Miss Reed were not dead; but appeared to betray no emotion on being informed, that although still alive, her cousin was in most imminent danger, and, turning away, from that time maintained a determined silence, which nothing could induce her to break, obstinately refusing all medical aid.

I visited her, in company with the physician in attendance, about six weeks afterwards, when she appeared to have recovered, in a great measure, the use of her limbs; but every lineament of the face was altered; the sight of one eye quite destroyed, and drawn outward, until little could be seen but a discoloured ball, over which the lid hung down, flabby and powerless; while a permanent distortion of the mouth added to the frightful appearance this occasioned. The beautiful hair was gone, and the unsightly bristles that remained were only partly concealed by the close-fitting cap she wore. It was indeed a sight to move the sternest heart. That proud and stately woman, who had so cruelly abused the power her personal beauty alone had given her; trifling alike with youth's ardent and pure first love, as with the deeper and more lasting affection of manhood, and glorying in the misery and wretchedness she caused! Stopped in her full career, her punishment

began already. Yet was there no index on that stolid face to tell how the dark spirit worked within; whether it felt remorse or sorrow for the crime, and pity for its victim, fearing a further punishment in this world or the next; whether the heart was torn by baffled rage and hatred still, scheming and plotting, even now that all hope was gone. Or was the strong intellect really clouded?

That night her attendant slept long and heavily; she might have been drugged, for Miss Arnatti had access to her desk and jewel-case, in the secret drawers of which were afterwards found several deadly and carefully-prepared poisons.

In a room below was a large chimney-glass, and here Catherine first saw the full extent of the awful judgment that had befallen her. A cry of rage and despair, and the loud crash of broken glass, aroused the inmates early in the morning: they found the mirror shivered into a thousand fragments, but their charge was gone. We learnt that day, that a person answering to her description, wearing a thick veil, and walking with pain and difficulty, had been one of the passengers on board a steam-packet that left the town at daylight.

For a long time Annie Reed lay in the shadow of death. She lived, however, many years, a suffering and patient invalid. Edwin married his betrothed and brought her home, where his fond mother and sister soon loved her as they loved him; and Annie played aunt to the first-born, and shared their happiness awhile; and when her gentle spirit passed away, her mother bent to the heavy blow, living resigned and peacefully with her remaining children to a good old age.

All efforts to trace the unhappy fugitive proved unavailing, and much anxiety was felt on her account; but about ten months after her disappearance, Mrs. Reed received a letter relative to the transfer of what little property her niece had possessed to a convent in Tuscany. The lady-abbess, a distant relative of Miss Arnatti's, had also written much concerning her, from which the following is extracted:—

"When a child, Catherine was for two years a boarder in this very house. Fifteen years passed since then, and she came to us travel-worn, and weak, and ill. Her history is known only to her confessor and myself; and she has drawn from us a promise that the name of England should never more be mentioned to her; and whatever tidings we may hear, in consequence of this communication, from those she had so cruelly injured, whether of life and health, or death—of forgiveness, or hatred and disgust at her ingratitude—that no allusion to it should be ever made to her. She follows rigidly the most severe rules of the establishment, but avoids all intercourse with the sisters. Much of her time is spent at the organ, and often, in the dead of night, we are startled or soothed by the low melancholy strains that come from the dark chapel. Her horror always on the approach of thunder-storms is a thing fearful to witness, and we think she cannot long survive the dreadful shocks she suffers from this cause. They leave her, too, in total darkness many days. A mystery to all, we only speak of her as the Blind Sister."

AID TO TALENT.

BY E. P. ROWSELL, ESQ.

It has been with amazement that we have read the history of many a a great man. It has seemed as though some evil genius had, at the outset of his career, strewed every kind of obstacle and difficulty in his path; and looking at the opposition which had to be surmounted, we have been astonished at the success which was finally achieved. So extraordinary have appeared to us the desperate energy and resolution with which such a man thrust from his course everything adverse to the attainment of his object, that perhaps it has been oftentimes his determination rather than his talent that has most forcibly struck us on the perusal of his memoirs. And there are suggested by this fact two very interesting and important considerations, upon which we propose to dwell in the present brief essay.

The first is,—that the talent, thus checked and hindered in its exhibition, has, when subsequently emancipated, shone with diminished glory and for a lessened period; and the second,—that if, in many cases, talent has only been so emancipated by the exertion of the greatest courage, resolution, and endurance, often and often, where these qualities have been wanting, must it have failed entirely to display itself, and thus been wasted and lost.

Now we need not argue the fact, that every mental like every bodily faculty improves by exercise and cultivation. The orator gives a higher character to his oratory by diligent study and persevering practice; the author, writing frequently and attentively, will find through this circumstance his writings possess a higher finish, and approach nearer to perfection; the abstruse thinker will perceive from his persistence in habits of thought that his mental faculties will be more at his command, will more readily grasp and successfully grapple with the subjects dictated by his will. Even so the painter will achieve a wonderful advance in his art by study, and the mechanician accomplish by perpetual toil a vast and manifest improvement. The orator, the author, the abstruse thinker, the painter and the mechanician, may each one be possessed of extraordinary talent, yet it cannot be denied that great as may be their ability, the future magnitude of it must, to a momentous extent, depend upon themselves. No amount of talent can supersede the necessity for diligent application; and if that application be withheld, the brightness of the mental gift will be sadly diminished. And if this be so, and if circumstances are at the commencement of their course so sadly adverse to many who have within them high intellectual ability, struggling in vain to gain access to a field wherein it might display itself, it is evident that the delay, the want of exercise, the absence of everything like encouragement and assistance, the presence of every obstacle and hindrance,—it is evident we say, that these circumstances will have their effect in dimming the intellectual lustre, and diminishing the mental strength. Say that I have within me the germs of a great orator,—that my mind is of that peculiar fashion that the expression of my ideas renders me none of that trouble which the task generally more or less

involves,—and that the mode of such expression exhibits a correctness and a force by which I may be immediately identified; assume this, and then contemplate the fact of my occupation being one affording scarcely the slightest opportunity of my testing or exercising my peculiar ability, —so that I might most naturally try to get rid of any notion of such ability, and to keep in mind only the uncongenial pursuit whereby I gained my bread. We say, so put the case before you, and indeed you can hardly fail to see that even if, as far as I can, I nourish the talent bestowed upon me, give it as much attention as lies in my power, and so energetically labour that, after a long and dreary period, after having sickened and despaired, revived and sickened again, and again revived, I drag myself into notice and subsequently into fame, it is little likely that bright luminary as I may then be discovered to be, and dazzling as may be my radiance, that I shall appear before the world as vividly and as strikingly as I *should* have appeared had my powers been fed by salutary practice and expanded by kind assistance, instead of having been warped by compulsory inaction, and chilled by difficulty and neglect? Nay, it can scarcely be but that I shall have suffered through the delay of my triumph; I am not the man I should have been under happier and brighter circumstances.

But let us go a step further. I have fought and I have won; I have toiled and I have triumphed. Just as I am about descending the hill of life I find that I have arrived at the goal of my ambition. Henceforth I am famous—henceforth my name will be in every man's mouth, and I shall be hailed as an important benefactor of my species. People marvel when they hear of the up-hill journey I have had to undergo, and are astonished at the perseverance with which I have combated and overcome the difficulties and dangers of the way. I have no cause to complain now of indifference or neglect. On the contrary, I am loaded with advantages and oppressed with benefits. There is a feeling that I ought to have been known before, and an emotion of regret that so many years I dwelt in obscurity, while the most prolonged life that I may enjoy will too speedily close for the welfare of my kind. *The most prolonged life!* it is scarcely likely that my days will be many; the same cause that kept me so long from the bulk of my fellow-men, will, in all probability, have worked to the hastening my removal from them. I pined in obscurity; I sorrowed when cruel restrictions were imposed upon my inclinations—when the mind had to devote itself to unworthy occupations, and the hand to insignificant pursuits. The struggle, long continued, was not without its effect, the fatigue, the anxiety, the hope deferred, the expectations unrealised, the aspirations thwarted, all tended to a consequence. True, I won the victory—true, undaunted and undismayed, I strained every nerve, exerted every energy, and fighting manfully, won gloriously; but the labour necessitated to obtain the triumph has made it sure that that triumph shall not be of long duration, and that the eye, at last lighted up with success, and the heart, at length caused to bound with the delight of victory, shall ere long, both the one and the other, cease to perform their office, and know the darkness and the quiet of death and the grave.

But now, if these evil results are consequent upon difficulty and delay in the exhibition of talent, in those cases where, after fierce struggling, the man more than ordinarily gifted has at length thrust himself into notice, it will be no arduous task to prove to the reader that there are in-

stances where even a greater evil accrues, where obstacles are succumbed to instead of being defeated, and where, therefore, the mental superiority never shines forth, and never brings good to its possessor or the world.

And, if regard have been paid to our opening remarks, the causes at work in such instances will be immediately apparent. We have implied that it can only be by "the exertion of the greatest courage, resolution, and endurance," that the unfavourably-circumstanced talented man in any department can hope to free himself from the trammels by which he may be beset, and display himself before the world in his true and real light. "The greatest courage, resolution, and endurance!"—what a combination of rare qualities is needed! Nerve to make every effort—will to make every effort—bodily health and strength sufficient for the making every effort. Why, if all these have been required to achieve its display, when circumstances have been adverse thereto, what a vast amount of talent must have been withheld from the world! And yet, inasmuch as we have given the finally-successful man credit for the possession of these qualities, we have only to withdraw them from his character to see at once that by so doing we render it impossible for his career to have ended otherwise than in defeat. But more than this, we need not abstract the three requirements, but any one, and the result will be the same. Take away his courage, take away the undaunted front which he opposed to every opposition, and the determined hand with which he wrenched away every obstacle, and you may give him credit for desire for fame, and health and strength to support him in the pursuit of it; but his timidity will form an insuperable bar to his success, *he will resign the effort in despair*. Take away his resolution, take away the hardy will, the irresistible impulse, the fervent longing for a great name, and you may ascribe to the man courage which might have sustained him against all opponents and nerved him against all assaults, and may imagine him blessed with health of body that would have stood unshaken under heaviest labours; but you cannot fail to see, that, without the stimulus which you have taken from him, *he will resign the effort in despair*. Take away his power of bodily endurance, substitute for the strong frame the sickly and the rude health, the delicate, and, indeed, the gifted man may burn with unquenchable desire, an appetite for greatness, for honour, for undying and transcendent and surpassing renown that cannot be, and will not be, suppressed, and with the will to toil nobly, he may have the courage and the nerve for labour—*he will* NOT *indeed resign the effort in despair*, he will not sit down and idly weep over thwarted endeavours and blasted hopes, he will put forth every energy, he will strain and toil with every power with which he has been gifted; but you must assuredly see that the chances infinitely are, that before even the goal shall have appeared in sight the runner will fall down and die. So that, assume the absence of any one of the three qualities we have named, and you leave little hope of success to the poor but gifted man struggling after greatness. There may be everything within him constituting a great man; placed in a prominent position he might be a glory to a nation, but as he is, weighed down by adverse circumstances, met in every direction by obstacle and opposition, the talent that is within him is, and will be, hid from the view, and no good be wrought by it, and no benefit conferred.

Now we are quite prepared to hear it said "you are only dwelling upon an evil known and acknowledged; the difficulty is to discover a

remedy; could such remedy be ascertained, it would be eagerly availed of." We grant this, and we say at once that it is not our intention at the present time to detail the means by which we believe the cause of talent might be importantly benefited. Our object now is simply to call earnest attention to the fact, that it would be indeed a great blessing if some mode could be devised whereby, of a certainty, superior ability could bring itself before the world, and freely work for the welfare of mankind. We want every thinking individual to consider this; we want the great and gifted in our land to consider this; we want the successful talented man to consider this. This is not a time when we can afford to lose mental ability of a high character. We are not so rich in talent at the present day; circumstances now are not so very easy, the way so very smooth, or the prospect so very bright, that it can be a matter of indifference that lofty talents in some cases should never see the light, and never shine out over a clouded creation. If we cast our eyes around at this hour, if we contemplate the mightiness of the aspect of the times, if we consider the evidence afforded by all things upon which our eye rests, that indeed, and in truth, there is much to make a wise and a kind man deeply ponder, and ask "whither are events tending? and what sights shall another generation witness?"—we say, if this be so, the need is indeed evident for the calling to labour every large and lofty capacity. Never let it be said "we have plenty of clever men, we need not go searching in the highways and by-ways for unknown ability." Neither let it be said "we cannot devise any scheme which would have the marvellous power of first discovering and then fostering the store of talent in a land fated to remain unrevealed." Let not either of these observations be uttered; rather let us hear the words—"the evil is clear, the remedy is difficult to be devised, but at least the effort shall be made; we will endeavour to give facility to the highly-gifted among us, to show in its full force the blessing conferred upon them, and thus enable them to achieve in glorious unison their own happiness and the world's advantage."

TASSO.

BY W. BRAILSFORD, ESQ.

THE world and all for love, the same fond theme
That woke the utterance of Petrarch's sighs
To music ever sweet; the gentle gleam
That lights the summer of man's memories
For ever and for aye,—such Tasso's dream.
Oh! who shall lift the veil that we may seem
Spectators of a true heart's miseries,
Or note a poet's wayward fantasies?
Are we not gainers on our part to learn
The secret strength of love's old gift of song?
Or if we feel life's scars, we yet discern
Its compensations, gleaning good from wrong,
And challenging the adverse powers of fate
To fill our minds with thoughts disconsolate.

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

By Madame Paalzow.

Chapter XXII.

Owing to the succession of festivities which took place in Amsterdam on the occasion of this visit, it was not till the evening of the second day that Lord Fawcett found time to repair to his stepmother's house, since his rank obliged him to accompany the king.

While the whole population of the city seemed attracted towards the quarter where such a display of magnificence took place, the more distant parts were left silent and deserted, and presented a striking contrast to the busy life of the crowded thoroughfares.

The quiet little retreat where the once brilliant Countess von Casambort now dwelt, enjoyed none of the advantages of this festival, save the genial rays of the bright spring sun, which gilt its old Gothic gables and windows, and warmed the portico beneath whose shelter Urica was wont to spend her days. The faintness and oppression under which she laboured, made it a necessity to her to pass much of her time in the open air; even at night, when her sufferings generally increased, she would often repair to her portico to breathe the fresh sea air, which alone could afford her relief.

During the last two days she had been deprived of her only society. Floris, as she well knew, had an important part to play in these festivities; and Hooft, of course, could not desert his post,—thus, as her two aged domestics never left her, she was wholly ignorant of the events of these days.

Seated, as usual, beneath her portico, her head leaning sadly on her hand, she listened with deep emotion to the roar of cannon which proclaimed the visit of the King of England to the arsenals, and his return to the palace. The royal honours which were so eagerly paid him, in anticipation of those awaiting him in his own country, too forcibly reminded her of her husband's death. To win these for the master to whom he was so faithfully attached, had been the object of his fond dreams, and, as Urica thought of the melancholy fate which had rewarded his loyalty, and the coldness of the king in acknowledging these services, she involuntarily exclaimed, with a deep sigh, "Ah, why do I live to see all this accomplished without him!"

Her face turned towards the sea, and as she raised her eyes from the ground, she observed a little boat approaching the shore. A young man, whose rich attire bespoke him to be an English cavalier, jumped out of it, and joined a group of children who were playing in front of a fisherman's cottage on the beach. He was evidently asking for a guide, since a few minutes afterwards he might be seen proceeding towards the little wicker-gate of Urica's dwelling, preceded by a barefooted urchin, to whom he threw a few guilders for his trouble.

As he walked up the avenue, Urica gazed on him with the deepest attention; a cry of surprise burst from her lips, for she had recognised

those noble features; then rising from her seat without assistance, she walked on slowly a few steps, borne up by the power of her feelings; she stretched out her hands towards him, and, as he threw himself at her feet, she said, with the fervour of inspiration, while she pressed his head to her bosom,

"My God, I thank thee that thou hast permitted me to live to see my Fawcett's son!"

The young man was deeply moved by the animation and enthusiasm which the thought of his being Lord Fawcett's son had awakened in the dying Urica, for he could but too plainly trace in her emaciated form the signs of approaching dissolution. He led her back to her seat, and, kneeling down, clasped her hands in his, and gazed again and again into that pale face, as if to assure himself she was, indeed, that brilliant Urica who had been the admiration of his boyish days.

Urica's eyes, too, were fixed upon him with melancholy earnestness; she had scrutinised and remembered each feature with painful eagerness. He was, indeed, the living image of him she had so deeply loved, and, although painfully reminded of her loss, she could not even for a moment withdraw her gaze.

Hitherto only single sentences had passed between them; no explanation had taken place, for Urica could not summon courage to talk of the past to Lord Fawcett's son, and the young earl, on his part, was withheld from various motives from speaking first.

We have before said, that he had been brought up under the auspices of his grandmother—a bigoted Roman Catholic. Owing to the stirring life his father had led, and the disastrous fate that had befallen him, the young man had been left without any counteracting power to the influence of the Dowager Countess of Kilmaine and her confessor. His sister was a few years his senior, and had been brought up in the Roman Catholic faith; and Lord Henry, naturally of an amiable and gentle disposition, had been induced, through her entreaties, as well as the exhortations of the old countess and her confessor, to embrace their faith at an early age.

When Lady Kilmaine first heard of her son-in-law's second marriage, she determined, ere she knew who this successor of her daughter was, to hate her cordially for this simple cause; and the fact she afterwards heard of Urica's being a foreigner and a Protestant, only contributed to increase the bitterness and vehemence of her feelings.

Urica's beauty, her dignified manner, her noble character, and all the pains she took to conciliate her husband's mother-in-law, were of no avail. The latter clung to her bitter feelings and prejudices with blind obstinacy, and exerted all her influence to instil the same feelings into the minds of her grandchildren, by persuading them they were wronged and defrauded their rights and their father's affections. She did not find much difficulty in creating a dislike in the mind of her granddaughter, who was naturally of a proud and suspicious temper; but all her representations failed in producing any effect on Lord Henry. He became warmly attached to his beautiful stepmother, who, on her part, sought to rouse his energy, and to awaken him from the mental lethargy into which, from delicate health and pliancy of disposition, he had fallen under the stern discipline of his grandmother. Lord Fawcett, as we have said, was often absent, and, therefore, ignorant of the state of affairs; and Urica, too, was soon obliged to part

from this gentle boy when she followed her husband to France, as no entreaties could prevail on the Countess Kilmaine to give up the rights she had acquired by Lord Fawcett's solemn agreement to preside over his early youth.

Though quite a boy at that time, no after-circumstance had power to overcome his affection for Urica, nor wholly to efface the influence she had exerted over his mind. The intrigues and artifices which Lady Kilmaine and her confessor employed to root out this impression, were innumerable and indescribable. They invented the basest falsehoods and calumnies against Urica, from the fear that their influence might be shaken through her means, and Lord Henry induced to forsake the new faith they had persuaded him to embrace. At a later period he was sent to Oxford by his father's desire; and it was while pursuing his studies there that Lord Fawcett's execution took place. Henry had loved this father with all the ardour and devotion of his generous nature, and looked up to him with enthusiastic admiration as the model it was his dearest desire to imitate. This sad event had the most painful influence upon him; all his hopes were crushed. He sank into a state of gloomy, hopeless sorrow, the ardour of his youth had fled, and life seemed to have lost its value for him.

In the mean time, neither age nor sorrow had weakened Lady Kilmaine's hatred to Urica; she continued to spread the most wicked reports concerning her, while her emissaries intercepted the letters Urica wrote at several intervals to the young earl after his father's death, as well as those he had written to her under the influence of his deep distress.

The continued dropping of water on the same spot will at length make an impression even on the hardest granite; and thus we must own that the young earl, unable to account for this enigmatical silence—his ears continually assailed by the same aspersions on her character—at length felt his trust in Urica somewhat shaken, and suffered himself to be dissuaded from his intention of seeking her out; but his morbid sensibility was so deeply wounded, that he now began to distrust the whole world, and was in danger of becoming a gloomy misanthrope.

Thus time passed, till General Monk's success had regained the crown for Charles II., and the young Earl of Fawcett, who had distinguished himself in this campaign, was named a member of the committee of lords who repaired to Holland to invite the king to take possession of his kingdom.

Circumstances had occurred since Lord Fawcett's arrival in this country to convince him of the falsehood of all he had heard concerning Urica; and had the shadow of a doubt still existed in his mind, her appearance, and the expression of deep sorrow and noble resignation on her pale countenance, would have chased it away for ever.

As he knelt at her feet, the self-reproach he felt for having allowed any one to influence him against her, kept him silent.

At length Urica, regaining composure, desired him to sit down and tell her why he had left all her letters unanswered. This broke the spell. Lord Fawcett, much surprised, replied he never had received any, and Urica's questions gradually led to the discovery of the truth. Though Lord Fawcett refrained from accusing any one but himself, Urica knew but too well to whom the blame was due. Yet she did not feel the slightest resentment. She was now superior to all petty irritability; she

only felt pity for the misguided individuals who thus degraded themselves, and for the unhappy youth, whose noble spirit had been crushed to become their tool.

As she led him to speak of his past life and his plans for the future, she observed with regret the gloomy despondency into which he had sunk, and the apathetic indifference with which he spoke of life.

"Alas!" said he, when she gently reproached him for this want of energy, "I was not born to be happy; the faults of my character and disposition must ever prevent my becoming so; my father's dreadful fate, too, has for ever destroyed the ardour of my youth. Ah, my mother! that sad stroke has irrecoverably despoiled both you and me of youth and vigour."

"Heaven forbid that you should think so, my son," replied Urica, with melancholy earnestness. "Yours is not the age for such a hopeless renunciation of happiness. Life has yet numerous claims on you; and, in seeking to meet them with energy and vigour, you will insensibly find the happiness you now despair of."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the approach of a light step; it was Floris, who came under Caas's escort to pay her evening visit to Urica. When she saw Lord Fawcett she stopped a moment, while a faint blush tinged her delicate cheek. Urica did not notice this, nor did she remark that the young lord's eye kindled with a brighter fire, for she was reflecting on what she had just said. She was not surprised at their being already acquainted, for Lord Fawcett had told her of his meeting with Floris, and the interest he had felt in listening to her account of his beloved stepmother. Turning to Floris, she asked for a description of her adventures; and thus time passed, till at length Urica reminded Floris she must return home to dress for the ball at the palace. She detained Lord Fawcett for a minute, to say she hoped to see him again on the ensuing day.

"Every day, my dearest mother," he replied. "As long as I am here, you cannot refuse me the happiness of seeing you, for which I have pined so long."

Thus saying, he tenderly kissed her hand, and returned towards the city.

The excitement into which Urica had been thrown by the events of this day, seemed strangely enough to have fanned the faint glimmering spark of her life into a gentle flame. She appeared to have regained her fading strength, and the quick penetration and lively sympathy which rendered her society so beneficial and so delightful to all who were privileged to enjoy it.

On the succeeding day the king left Amsterdam for Sheveling, where a squadron was waiting to carry him over to England. Lord Fawcett, however, remained behind. The king had charged him with a mission to the court of France, and entrusted him with private despatches to his mother, Queen Henrietta, who was still residing there. After having accompanied the royal *cortége* some miles out of town, he returned in the train of the city authorities, and eagerly repaired to Urica's little country-house.

He found her in her usual place, but she was not alone; Floris, pale and silent, was sitting at her feet, her lovely head reclining sadly on her hand, while she mingled her tears with those of her aunt for the loss of the noble

and excellent Madame van Marseeven, who had suddenly expired that morning.

When Lord Fawcett approached, Floris smiled faintly through her tears, and gave him her hand as to an old acquaintance.

The touching sorrow of Floris, and the animation of Urica, seemed to have lessened the difference between them; for, in spite of the ravages time and sorrow had committed on Urica's beauty, their resemblance surprised Lord Fawcett more than ever.

There was something inexpressibly attractive to him in poor Floris's soft and melancholy mood, for his own inclination ever pointed that way, and thus no state of things could have been better calculated to increase the interest of these young people for each other. Added to this, Néess had been so alarmed at the violence of Floris's grief at the death of her excellent friend, that he had yielded more easily than usual to Hooft's proposal that he should leave the poor girl at liberty to seek relief for her sorrow in visiting her friends.

She could find no admittance in the house of mourning, for Mynherr van Marseeven, in the gloomy selfishness of sorrow, had sent his two youngest daughters—the only ones who were yet single—to the houses of their married sisters, and insisted on keeping watch alone near the corpse of his wife, inaccessible to every one else; and thus Floris eagerly repaired to her beloved aunt, Urica, there to seek comfort for her aching heart.

She certainly found more gratification there than she expected, for she had not thought of meeting Lord Fawcett, who she imagined would not return till night. It was with difficulty she disguised her emotion, on hearing that he was to depart in a few days on his embassy to France. Yet, perhaps, the certainty of this approaching separation rendered the intercourse of these young people more easy and unrestrained, and increased the charm they felt in each other's society.

Urica's earnest solicitude for Lord Fawcett's happiness induced her to observe him closely, in hopes of obtaining a true insight into his character, and perhaps warding off, in some measure, the evil influence which had bowed down his spirits.

She was enchanted by the noble qualities of his mind—necessarily apparent even to the most cursory observer; yet his character filled her with serious alarm, for the most estimable and amiable qualities were mingled with the most dangerous elements of weakness—distrust of himself and others,—a natural disposition to violence, which, though it seldom broke forth, yet evidently existed in his mind,—and a sort of dreamy indolence, tending to misanthropy and a love of solitude. She felt that all these qualities exposed him to the danger of becoming a tool in the hands of those who knew his faults, and possessed sufficient penetration to call them into action.

His acquirements were very extensive, and his taste refined and cultivated. Whenever he overcame his usual taciturnity, his conversation was well chosen, and displayed much talent and judgment. Yet it was evident he withdrew from thus exerting himself whenever he could, and preferred listening to others in dreamy inactivity. But, when alone with Urica he was led to unburden his heart to her, she was ready to weep at the state of discouragement into which he had fallen, and the prevailing tendency in him to see everything in life only from its darkest side.

On the last day of his stay in Amsterdam, Urica was destined to experience a deeper cause for anxiety, for she suddenly discovered a strange alteration in Lord Fawcett and Floris.

While the former evinced an animation and cheerfulness of manner which could not be the offspring of his natural disposition, Floris had exchanged her happy composure and frank easy manner for a certain bashfulness and timidity, while her eyes sunk and her heart throbbed beneath Lord Fawcett's ardent gaze.

Urica really loved Floris as if she had been her own daughter, and hence arose her anxiety; she trembled for the happiness of her niece, if Lord Fawcett's love should lead him to desire a union with her; she knew the character and opinions of his relations, and feared the influence they exercised over him. She was convinced the connexion would be highly displeasing to them, and Floris, alone in a strange land, would be quite at their mercy, while her being a zealous Protestant would provide them with a ready point of attack; for Urica knew the young earl clung to his faith with conscientious anxiety, and refrained from employing his reason or judgment to test its truth, as a temptation he was bound to resist.

The existence of this danger had not been fully impressed on Urica's mind till the morning of this day, when Floris yielded to Lord Fawcett's entreaties to pay her a visit at her father's house. His expressions of delight on receiving this permission, and their corresponding effects on Floris, could not be mistaken; and when the gondola was ready in which the young people were to proceed thither by the canal, accompanied by Ulla, the young earl knelt down at Urica's feet, his countenance radiant with joy, and cried, "Oh, my mother, I shall have to thank you for recovering the happiness of my life!" she felt at once what he meant by these words; and the reflections we have already alluded to occurred to her mind, and terminated in the conviction that it was her duty to prevent this union, or at least to retard it, and give all the parties concerned time for mature consideration.

She had taken but little interest in this visit to Van der Néess's house, as she deemed it an event of little importance, or merely a whim of the young earl's to see whether Floris would be disconcerted by the vulgar appearance of her father, of which he had heard so much; but now Urica looked on this visit as an important crisis, which might produce an influence favourable to her views, since she hoped much from the impression Néess could not fail to create on a man of Lord Fawcett's high breeding and refined feelings.

But Urica forgot that when a man is in love ere he is sure of the object of his affections, he never meets with any obstacle but he construes it into a new cause for persevering in his determination. Thus the effect of Van der Néess's appearance on Lord Fawcett was only to strengthen his love for Floris, by convincing himself she was in an unworthy situation. He pictured himself as her deliverer; and his generous spirit rejoiced at the idea of offering her a brilliant position in life, instead of one that appeared to him so ignominious.

Van der Néess, at first, felt angry and uneasy to see a Fawcett enter his house. He imagined he must be in reduced circumstances, and feared an attack upon his cash: but when this apprehension was removed, his manner became deferential and cringing to a revolting degree.

To any one who was not acquainted with this train of thought, the coarse speeches Van der Néess at first addressed to the young lord must have been incomprehensible. The surprise, nay, the terror of Lord Fawcett, when he saw Van der Néess, and the struggle which took place in his mind ere he could bring himself to believe this repulsive vulgar man to be the father of his beautiful Floris, prevented his taking any notice of what was said. But he felt indignant to see Floris busy herself about Van der Néess with affectionate eagerness, while she strove, by her enchanting sweetness, to dissipate his sullen, suspicious humour. When she turned away from her father, Lord Fawcett thought she could no longer be the same, and that something of this hateful communion must adhere to her; and when she approached him, he felt a sort of coolness towards her, and looked at her with embarrassment, as if he thought she were making game of him, and all this would turn out some coarse jest, and it would be proved at last that this low man was not her father after all.

Van der Néess, of course, had no idea of all this, and it was no easy matter to make him understand the tone he ought to assume towards the young lord, for Floris refrained from exercising her accustomed influence over her father, partly from the preoccupation of her mind, and partly, because more than ever, nay, perhaps for the first time in her life, she felt ashamed of his personal appearance.

Nor did the young people succeed in recovering their good-humour; Van der Néess, satisfied by the composed answers of the young earl, that the latter had regained possession of his confiscated estates, changed his rude tone to one of cringing civility; but this made him appear, if possible, more repulsive, and the young people soon withdrew from his society, under the pretext of visiting the court of pleasure.

Urica easily observed that both Lord Fawcett and Floris had been put out by this unlucky visit; but far from being displeased, she rejoiced that they should have experienced an interruption to the feelings which had hitherto absorbed them, and cherished a hope that the same cause might prove an obstacle to any further advances. Nor did Lord Fawcett hesitate to express his surprise to Urica at the wide dissimilarity between the father and daughter. She smiled in secret at the reluctance he showed to believe in the reality of this relationship; yet he could never mention Floris's name without evident emotion.

Lord Fawcett's mission to the court of France was of a delicate and important nature. It was the first time he appeared in a public character, and he was naturally anxious to acquit himself worthily of the trust reposed in him. Notwithstanding the empire Floris exercised over his mind, his approaching departure induced him to turn his thoughts to this subject; and as he had never been in France, he applied to Urica for some advice regarding the course he should adopt at this court, which was rising to its highest glory under Louis XIV., and attracted the eyes of all Europe.

No one could be better qualified to give advice on this subject than Urica. She had only to call to mind her own sojourn at the court of Versailles, and through her correspondence with her royal friend, the unhappy Henrietta, she was perfectly aware of all that passed at that intriguing court, and this enabled her to give the young chargé d'affaires an accurate description of the state of things, which could not fail to be of service to him. She was the more ready to undertake this task, from

a wish to fill up the time with serious conversation, in order to turn Lord Fawcett's thoughts from Floris, and prevent his being led to make any declaration of his sentiments to her niece.

But though she succeeded in this particular, it was not in her power to prevent his making a confession to *herself* of his feelings with regard to Floris. Lord Fawcett followed her into her closet, whither she retired to finish a letter to the queen, and throwing himself at her feet, he cried,

"My mother, during the short time I have lived with you, you have given a new turn to my life. You have aroused me from my selfish languor; and, if ever I become worthy of the name of Fawcett, I shall owe it to you, who have taught me what noble exertions such a name demands of him who bears it. Trust me, your kind solicitude for my welfare shall not be thrown away; but now, I beseech you go, a step farther yet, and make me happy—permit me to sue for Floris, and promise me the happiness of possessing her on my return."

Urica was thrown off her guard by this sudden attack. All her objections rushed forcibly to her mind, and she exclaimed, with her old vehemence of manner,

"Never! Henry, never! It must not be; think no more of it. Promise me you will not. No, Henry; do not look so sad, but, indeed, it cannot be!"

Urica had no sooner said this, than she felt she had placed herself in an embarrassing position by her refusal; she was apprehensive of appearing harsh, and checking the self-confidence she had succeeded in arousing, by telling him the true cause of her objection, which existed merely in his character; and yet she felt that if she alleged no reasons, her simple refusal would not suffice to quell his ardour.

A glance at Lord Fawcett convinced her of this; yet it was not merely sorrow that she read in his countenance, but an access of the violence she had before discovered formed part of his character. Starting to his feet, he exclaimed, in a tone of offended pride,

"Ha! is it thus you refuse her to me? and will you give me no reason for this mortifying rejection? What objections, I wonder, can you have to my union with her, when I find none, after I have seen the miserable abode where she has been brought up, and the low vulgar wretch whom she terms her father?"

Urica saw he was trembling; his countenance grew pale, and his eyes sparkled with anger, while all his movements betrayed uncontrollable violence.

"Ah!" thought she, "how fully this vehemence justifies my determination!" She remained silent for some minutes, absorbed in melancholy thought, and considered how much of the truth she might reveal, without running the risk of discouraging him too much.

But her silence seemed to increase his excitement, and he vented his feelings in incoherent exclamations.

"Henry," said she at last, in a mild, but serious manner, "you forget yourself. Say, what security can you, with your present disposition, offer to a girl for the happiness of her life?"

Lord Fawcett looked anxiously at Urica; but his passionate excitement was past, and with noble candour he acknowledged himself in fault.

"Forgive me," he said; "I was in the wrong. But, mother, you wound

me to the heart by your decided refusal. And is that the reason? Does my character inspire you with so much distrust?" he added, sadly.

"Henry," replied Urica, in a gentle but decided tone, "you must learn to become happy yourself, and through yourself, ere you can offer happiness to another being whose fate you seek to unite with yours. You confess that you have but lately acquired a correct view of your duties in life—do not imagine I doubt the sincerity of your noble resolutions—but you must put these into practice, and prove their influence on your conduct in active life, ere you can acquire that stability of character which will enable you to become the founder of domestic happiness, and ere those who love you and the maiden of your choice will cease to oppose your wishes.

"Ha," exclaimed Lord Fawcett, eagerly, "would every objection then be removed that now renders you so decided to oppose them?"

"I know not," said Urica, thoughtfully. "Henry, you are a Roman Catholic, and your church will ever possess a ruling power over your life: I tremble to think of the trials to which a wife of a different persuasion might be exposed."

"Ah, mother," cried Henry, reproachfully, "do you deem me so weak as to be unable to protect the wife I have chosen?"

"Remember, too," continued Urica, "that Floris's descent from so low a person as this Jacob van der Néess, may be accounted a reproach to her."

"Fear not," replied the earl; "I shall ward that off from her."

"Enough," cried Urica, rising in some excitement; "I have given you sufficient reasons for my determination, and I must persist in my desire that you do not compromise your liberty, or that of Floris, by any declaration of your feelings. It is proper you should enter your new active career unshackled by any engagement, in order to be able to devote your attention more fully to all the interests and demands of life. I see it is useless to say any more now on the subject that has excited your passions and led your judgment captive; but, at a future period, you will thank me for my decision."

Lord Fawcett, too, arose—a violent struggle took place in his breast—but though his pride had been severely wounded by Urica's refusal, he was too candid to deny to himself that there was much reason in what she had said; therefore, summoning up all his resolution, he exclaimed, after a moment's silence,

"You shall not say that I have refused you the first active testimony of my obedience. I will prove to you how much I love and honour you, by submitting to your will in spite of the severest temptation to disobedience I have ever experienced."

Floris had in the mean time been sitting beneath the portico in a deep reverie. A secret presentiment, suggested by the quick penetration of love, told her she was the subject of this long conference between Lord Fawcett and her aunt, and she vainly sought to conceal her agitation from Cornelius Hooft, who was sitting beside her, exhausting himself in fruitless attempts to attract her attention.

At length Urica and Lord Fawcett joined them. Floris instantly remarked a change in his manner—the natural result of this conversation. He had previously deemed himself secure of his end, and only waited for Urica's consent, of which he never doubted, to pour out his whole heart

at the feet of his beloved; and how different the course he had to adopt now! But Floris interpreted his embarrassment and distress into coldness; and as she had on this day first felt shame at her father's vulgar nature, she attributed this sudden change in Henry's manner to his discovery of her low birth.

This thought occasioned her the most poignant sorrow; no misfortune had ever before wounded her feelings so deeply; but her maidenly pride was aroused, and she hastily determined for ever to conceal from him her hopes and feelings.

Thus resolved, she quietly kept her seat near Urica, nor once raised her eye to look at Lord Fawcett, who could scarcely command his emotion as the hour of separation arrived. At length he was obliged to depart. When he had taken leave of Urica, he knelt down for a moment before Floris, who was trembling in every limb. He uttered not a word, but in excessive agitation pressed her hand to his lips with a deep sigh, hid his face for a moment in her veil, and then hastened from the spot.

When he was gone, Floris sank fainting into her aunt's arms, overwhelmed by the deep sorrow of her young heart. Urica bent with anxious solicitude over her darling. She understood her feelings. At length she succeeded in restoring animation. Floris opened her eyes in alarm; and, when she saw the beloved countenance of her aunt fixed on her with an expression of pity and love, she heaved a deep sigh, and a flood of tears relieved her bursting heart.

"Weep, my poor child, weep," said Urica. "I can enter into your feelings, and, when you are more composed, I will give you a proof of my esteem, by telling you what passed between Henry and me."

Floris no longer expected to receive comfort from what she might hear. When she had heard from Urica an account of the conversation that had proved so fatal to her hopes, the only thing that was impressed on her mind was the conviction that Henry still loved her, and that only her aunt's interference had prevented her receiving from his lips a confirmation of the hopes she had unconsciously cherished.

Yet she did not feel the slightest resentment towards her aunt, but, after a while, asked her to repeat the reasons which had influenced her decision.

She listened with an air of resignation as Urica complied with this request; and though she at first combated her aunt's objections, the latter at length succeeded in convincing her of their justice; and the happiness she had at first felt from the certainty of being loved by the earl, gave way to deep dejection. She sank into a melancholy reverie, and Urica, who felt for her with a mother's tenderness, forbore to disturb her thoughts, and shared her sorrow.

At length Caas poked his good-humoured face in at the gate, and roused them from their thoughtful mood. The moon had risen above the water, and its mild rays fell on the surrounding scene. Floris arose, calm and silent; as she knelt down before Urica, the moon shone full upon her face. She was very pale, and fixed her sad eyes inquiringly upon her aunt, as if she would ask, "Is this life?" But there was no shadow of distrust or bitterness in her noble countenance; its expression was one of humble, passive resignation to the heavy trial imposed upon her.

Both Floris and her aunt knew they should not meet again for several

days, since Van der Néess had a right to complain of having been neglected by Floris during this latter time, and would not fail to make this a reason for keeping her at home; thus their parting was affectionate, though they dared not trust themselves to say much. Floris imprinted a farewell kiss on her aunt's cheek, and then slowly walked down the avenue, followed by Caas. When she arrived at the gate, she examined her veil; there was no doubt of the fact, the blue rosette was gone, and even the corner of her blue gauze veil was torn off—it had evidently ceded to some secret deed of violence; a faint gleam of joy lit up her pale features; she timidly raised the torn end of her veil to her lips; then, alarmed at this bold action, she blushed deeply, and suddenly quickening her steps, ran down to the shore so hastily, that Caas, infinitely surprised, was obliged to exchange his pace for a quick trot, in order to keep up with her.

The evening was even more lovely on the water than on the land; a grey mist slept on the opposite shore of the canal, which was very broad, and the oars sparkled in the moonshine every time they pierced the deep blue waters. Everything around bore an air of peaceful repose; the inhabitants of the fishing-huts on the shore sat at the doors of their dwellings, enjoying their evening repose, while some few still lingered in their fishing skiffs; and Floris, sad and solitary, in the same boat in which, a few hours previous, she had gone in the same direction, accompanied by one who was now, perhaps, lost to her for ever, and in whom all her hopes of happiness were centred.

Suddenly, a bright flash gleamed through the mist, and the thunder of cannon rolled over the waters.

"Merciful God! what is that?" cried Floris, burying her face in her hands.

"It is the signal of an English ambassador leaving the port," replied Caas. "The French vessel which is to take him away is to sail to-morrow morning early, and, therefore, he goes on board to-night."

Floris wept bitterly, and the next shots seemed to pierce her heart. Lord Fawcett, the chargé d'affaires of the King of England, who was now proceeding towards the vessel that was to carry him to the coasts of the mighty kingdom of France, what a different person he seemed from Henry at Urica's feet! A deep unutterable feeling of woe took possession of her heart. Just as the last shot resounded through the air, the boat stopped at Jacob's court of business.

Drawing her veil over her tearful countenance, Floris followed Caas, who unlocked the door of the little court of pleasure, and then discreetly withdrew.

She advanced towards the old lime-tree, and threw herself into the seat beneath its sheltering branches, the third daughter of the Casamborts who bedewed it with her tears. The moon again rose above the wall of the court, and shone on the marble slabs, where, in former days, Floris, in the happy innocence of childhood, performed her fanciful moonshine dance, watched over with affection and solicitude by those eyes that were now closed in death. She wept over all she had lost, till, at length, wearied with sorrow and weeping, she threw herself on her couch, and her heavy eyelids sank in sleep.

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

Chapter III.

THE ASSHETONS.

Between Sir Ralph Assheton of the Abbey and the inhabitants of Whalley, many of whom were his tenants, he being joint lord of the manor with John Braddyll of Portfield, the best possible feeling subsisted; for though somewhat austere in manner, and tinctured with Puritanism, the worthy knight was sufficiently shrewd, or more correctly speaking, sufficiently liberal-minded, to be tolerant of the opinions of others, and being moreover sincere in his own religious views, no man could call him in question for them; besides which he was very hospitable to his friends, very bountiful to the poor, a good landlord, and a humane man. His very austerity of manner, tempered by stately courtesy, added to the respect he inspired, especially as he could now and then relax into gaiety, and when he did so, his smile was accounted singularly sweet. But in general he was grave and formal; stiff in attire, and stiff in gait; cold and punctilious in manner, precise in speech, and exacting in due respect from both high and low, which was seldom, if ever, refused him. Amongst Sir Ralph's other good qualities, for such it was esteemed by his friends and retainers, and they were, of course, the best judges, was a strong love of the chase, and perhaps he indulged a little too freely in the sports of the field, for a gentleman of a character so staid and decorous; but his popularity was far from being diminished by the circumstance; neither did he suffer the rude and boisterous companionship into which he was brought by indulgence in this his favourite pursuit in any way to affect him. Though still young, Sir Ralph was prematurely gray, and this combined with the sad severity of his aspect, gave him the air of one considerably past the middle term of life, though this appearance was contradicted again by the youthful fire of his eagle eye. His features were handsome and strongly marked, and he wore a pointed beard and moustaches, with a shaved cheek. Sir Ralph Assheton had married twice, his first wife being a daughter of Sir James Bellingham, of Levens, in Northumberland, by whom he had two children; while his second choice fell upon Eleanor Shuttleworth, the lovely and well-endowed heiress of Gawthorpe, to whom he had been recently united. In his attire, even when habited for the chase or a merry-making, like the present, the Knight of Whalley affected a sombre colour, and ordinarily wore a quilted

doublet of black silk, immense trunk hose of the same material, stiffened with whalebone, puffed out well-wadded sleeves, falling bands, for he eschewed the ruff as savouring of vanity, boots of black flexible leather, ascending to the hose, and armed with spurs with gigantic rowels, a round-crowned small-brimmed black hat, with an ostrich feather placed in the side and hanging over the top, a long rapier on his hip, and a dagger in his girdle. This buckram attire, it will be easily conceived, contributed no little to the natural stiffness of his thin tall figure.

Sir Ralph Assheton was great-grandson of Richard Assheton, who flourished in the time of Abbot Paslew, and who, in conjunction with John Braddyll, fourteen years after the unfortunate prelate's attainder and the dissolution of the monastery, had purchased the abbey and domains of Whalley from the Crown, subsequently to which, a division of the property so granted took place between them, the abbey and part of the manor falling to the share of Richard Assheton, whose descendants had now, for three generations, made it their residence. Thus the whole of Whalley belonged to the families of Assheton and Braddyll, which had intermarried; the latter, as has been stated, dwelling at Portfield, a fine old seat in the neighbourhood.

A very different person from Sir Ralph was his cousin Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, who, except as regards his Puritanism, might be considered a type of the Lancashire squire of the day. A precisian in religious notions, and constant in attendance at church and lecture, he put no sort of restraint upon himself, but mixed up fox-hunting, otter-hunting, shooting at the mark, and perhaps shooting with the long-bow, foot-racing, horse-racing, and, in fact, every other kind of country diversion, not forgetting tippling, cards, and dicing, with daily devotion, discourses, and psalm-singing, in the oddest way imaginable. A thorough sportsman was Squire Nicholas Assheton, well versed in all the arts and mysteries of hawking and hunting. Not a man in the county could ride harder, hunt deer, unkennel fox, unearth badger, or spear otter, better than he. And then, as to tippling, he would sit you a whole afternoon at the alehouse, and be the merriest man there, and drink a bout with every farmer present. And if the parson chanced to be out of hearing, he would never make a mouth at a round oath, nor choose a second expression when the first would serve his turn. Then, who so constant at church or lecture as Squire Nicholas—though he did snore sometimes during the long sermons of his cousin, the Rector of Middleton. A great man was he at all weddings, christenings, churchings, and funerals, and never neglected his bottle at these ceremonies, nor any sport in doors or out of doors, meanwhile. In short, such a roystering Puritan was never known. A good-looking young man was the Squire of Downham, possessed of a very athletic frame, and a most vigorous constitution, which helped him, together with the prodigious exercise he took, through any excess. He had a sanguine complexion, with a broad, good-natured visage, which he could lengthen at will in a surprising manner. His hair was cropped close to his head, and the razor did daily duty over his cheek and chin, giving him the roundhead look, some years later, characteristic of the Puritanical party. Nicholas had taken to wife Dorothy, daughter of Richard Greenacres of Worston, and was most fortunate in his choice, which is more than can be said for his lady, for I cannot uphold the squire as a model of conjugal fidelity. Report affirmed that he

loved more than one pretty girl under the rose. Squire Nicholas was not particular as to the quality or make of his clothes, provided they wore well and protected him against the weather, and was generally to be seen in doublet and hose of stout fustian, which had seen some service, with a broad-leaved hat, originally green, but of late bleached to a much lighter colour; but he was clad on this particular occasion in ash-coloured habiliments fresh from the tailor's hands, with buff boots drawn up to the knee, and a new round hat from York with a green feather in it. His legs were slightly embowed, and he bore himself like a man rarely out of the saddle.

Downham, the residence of the squire, was a fine old house, very charmingly situated to the north of Pendle Hill, of which it commanded a magnificent view, and a few miles from Clithero. The grounds about it were well-wooded and beautifully broken and diversified, watered by the Ribble, and opening upon the lovely and extensive valley deriving its name from that stream. The house was in good order and well maintained, and the stables plentifully furnished with horses, while the hall was adorned with various trophies and implements of the chase; but as I propose paying its owner a visit, I shall defer any further description of the place till an opportunity arrives for examining it in detail.

A third cousin of Sir Ralph's, though in the second degree, likewise present on the May Day in question, was the Reverend Abdias Assheton, Rector of Middleton, a very worthy man, who though differing from his kinsman upon some religious points, and not altogether approving of the conduct of one of them, was on good terms with both. The Rector of Middleton was portly and middle-aged, fond of ease and reading, and by no means indifferent to the good things of life. He was unmarried, and passed much of his time at Middleton Hall, the seat of his near relative Sir Richard Assheton, to whose family he was greatly attached, and whose residence closely adjoined the rectory.

A fourth cousin, also present, was young Richard Assheton, of Middleton, eldest son and heir of the owner of that estate. Possessed of all the good qualities largely distributed among his kinsmen, with none of their drawbacks, this young man was as tolerant and bountiful as Sir Ralph, without his austerity and sectarianism; as keen a sportsman and as bold a rider as Nicholas, without his propensities to excess; as studious, at times, and as well read as Abdias, without his laziness and self-indulgence; and as courtly and well-bred as his father, Sir Richard, who was esteemed one of the most perfect gentlemen in the county, without his haughtiness. Then he was the handsomest of his race, though the Asshetons were accounted the handsomest family in Lancashire, and no one minded yielding the palm to young Richard, even if it could be contested, he was so modest and unassuming. At this time, Richard Assheton was about two and twenty, tall, gracefully and slightly formed, but possessed of such remarkable vigour, that even his cousin Nicholas could scarcely compete with him in athletic exercises. His features were fine and regular, with an almost Phrygian precision of outline; his hair was of a dark brown, and fell in clustering curls over his brow and neck; and his complexion was fresh and blooming, and set off by a slight beard and moustache, carefully trimmed and pointed. His dress consisted of a dark green doublet, with wide velvet hose, embroidered and fringed, descending nearly to the knee, where they were tied with points and ribands,

met by dark stockings, and terminated by red velvet shoes with roses in them. A white feather adorned his black broad-leaved hat, and he had a rapier by his side.

Amongst Sir Ralph Assheton's guests were Richard Greenacres, of Worston, Nicholas Assheton's father-in-law; Richard Sherborne, of Dunnow, near Sladeburne, who had married Dorothy, Nicholas's sister; Mistress Robinson, of Raydale House, aunt to the knight and the squire, and two of her sons, both stout youths, with John Braddyll and his wife, of Portfield. Besides these, there was Master Roger Nowell, a justice of the peace in the county, and a very active and busy one too, who had been invited for an especial purpose, to be explained hereafter. Head of an ancient Lancashire family, residing at Read, a fine old hall, some little distance from Whalley, Roger Nowell, though a worthy, well-meaning man, dealt hard measure from the bench, and seldom tempered justice with mercy. He was sharp-featured, dry, and sarcastic, and being adverse to country sports, his presence on the occasion was the only thing likely to impose restraint on the revellers. Other guests there were, but none of particular note.

The ladies of the party consisted of Lady Assheton, Mistress Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, Dorothy Assheton, of Middleton, sister to Richard, a lovely girl of eighteen, with light fleecy hair, summer blue eyes, and a complexion of exquisite purity, Mistress Sherborne, of Dunnow, Mistress Robinson, of Raydale, and Mistress Braddyll, of Portfield, before-mentioned, together with the wives and daughters of some others of the neighbouring gentry; most noticeable amongst whom was Mistress Alice Nutter, of Rough Lee, in Pendle Forest, a widow lady, and a relative of the Assheton family.

Mistress Nutter might be a year or two turned of forty, but she still retained a very fine figure, and much beauty of feature, though of a cold and disagreeable cast. She was dressed in mourning, though her husband had been dead several years, and her rich dark habiliments well became her pale complexion and raven hair. A proud poor gentleman was Richard Nutter, her late husband, and his scanty means not enabling him to keep up as large an establishment as he desired, or to be as hospitable as his nature prompted, his temper became soured, and he visited his ill-humours upon his wife, who, devotedly attached to him, to all outward appearance at least, never resented his ill-treatment. All at once, and without any previous symptoms of ailment, or apparent cause, unless it might be over-fatigue in hunting the day before, Richard Nutter was seized with a strange and violent illness, which after three or four days of acute suffering, brought him to the grave. During his illness he was constantly and zealously tended by his wife, but he displayed great aversion to her, declaring himself bewitched, and that an old woman was ever in the corner of his room mumbling wicked enchantments against him. But as no such old woman could be seen, these assertions were treated as delirious ravings. They were not, however, forgotten after his death, and some people said that he had certainly been bewitched, and that a waxen image made in his likeness, and stuck full of pins, had been picked up in his chamber by Mistress Alice and cast into the fire, and as soon as it melted he had expired. Such tales only obtained credence with the common folk; but as Pendle Forest was a sort of weird region, many reputed witches dwelling in it, they were the more readily believed,

even by those who acquitted Mistress Nutter of all share in the dark transaction.

Mistress Nutter gave the best proof that she respected her husband's memory by not marrying again, and she continued to lead a very secluded life at Rough Lee, a lonesome house in the heart of the forest. She lived quite by herself, for she had no children, her only daughter having perished somewhat strangely when quite an infant. Though a relative of the Asshetons, she kept up little intimacy with them, and it was a matter of surprise to all that she had been drawn from her seclusion to attend the present revel. Her motive, however, in visiting the Abbey, was to obtain the assistance of Sir Ralph Assheton, in settling a dispute between her and Roger Nowell, relative to the boundary line of part of their properties which came together; and this was the reason why the magistrate had been invited to Whalley. After hearing both sides of the question, and examining plans of the estates, which he knew to be accurate, Sir Ralph, who had been appointed umpire, pronounced a decision in favour of Roger Nowell, but Mistress Nutter refusing to abide by it, the settlement of the matter was postponed till the day but one following, between which time the landmarks were to be investigated by a certain little lawyer named Potts, who attended on behalf of Roger Nowell; together with Nicholas and Richard Assheton, on behalf of Mistress Nutter. Upon their evidence it was agreed by both parties that Sir Ralph should pronounce a final decision, to be accepted by them, and to that effect they signed an agreement. The three persons appointed to the investigation settled to start for Rough Lee early on the following morning.

A word as to Master Thomas Potts. This worthy was an attorney from London, who had officiated as clerk of the court at the assizes at Lancaster, where his quickness had so much pleased Roger Nowell, that he sent for him to Read to manage this particular business. A sharp-witted fellow was Potts, and versed in all the quirks and tricks of a very subtle profession—not over-scrupulous, provided a client would pay well; prepared to resort to any expedient to gain his object, and quite conversant enough with both practice and precedent to keep himself straight. A bustling consequential little personage was he, moreover; very fond of delivering an opinion, even when unasked, and of a meddling, make-mischief turn, constantly setting men by the ears. A suit of rusty black, a parchment-coloured skin, small wizen features, a turn-up nose, scant eyebrows, and a great yellow forehead constituted his external man. He partook of the hospitality at the Abbey, but had his quarters at the Dragon. He it was who counselled Roger Nowell to abide by the decision of Sir Ralph, confidently assuring him that he must carry his point.

This dispute was not, however, the only one the knight had to adjust, or in which Master Potts was concerned. A claim had recently been made by a certain Sir Thomas Metcalfe, of Nappay, in Wensleydale, near Bainbridge, to the house and manor of Raydale, belonging to his neighbour, John Robinson, whose lady, as has been shown, was a relative of the Asshetons. Robinson himself had gone to London to obtain advice on the subject, while Sir Thomas Metcalfe, who was a man of violent disposition, had threatened to take forcible possession of Raydale, if it were not delivered to him without delay, and to eject the Robinson family. Having consulted Potts, however, on the subject, whom he had met at Read, the latter strongly dissuaded him from the course, and recommended him to call to his aid the strong arm of the law; but this he

rejected, though he ultimately agreed to refer the matter to Sir Ralph Assheton, and for this purpose he had come over to Whalley, and was at present a guest at the vicarage. Thus it will be seen that Sir Ralph Assheton had his hands full, while the little London lawyer, Master Potts, was tolerably well occupied. Besides Sir Thomas Metcalfe, Sir Richard Molyneux, and Mr. Parker, of Brownsholme, were guests of Dr. Ormerod at the vicarage.

Such was the large company assembled to witness the May Day revels at Whalley, and if harmonious feelings did not exist amongst all of them, little outward manifestation was made of enmity. The dresses and appointments of the pageant having been provided by Sir Ralph Assheton, who, Puritan as he was, encouraged all harmless country pastimes, it was deemed necessary to pay him every respect, even if no other feeling would have prompted the attention, and therefore the troop had stopped on seeing him and his guests issue from the Abbey gate. At pretty nearly the same time Doctor Ormerod and his party came from the vicarage towards the green.

No order of march was observed, but Sir Ralph and his lady, with two of his children by the former marriage, walked first. Then came some of the other ladies, with the Rector of Middleton, John Braddyll, and the two sons of Mistress Robinson. Next came Mistress Nutter, Roger Nowell and Potts walking after her, eyeing her maliciously, as her proud figure swept on before them. Even if she saw their looks or overheard their jeers, she did not deign to notice them. Lastly came young Richard Assheton, of Middleton, and Squire Nicholas, both in high spirits, and laughing and chatting together.

"A brave day for the morris-dancers, cousin Dick," observed Nicholas Assheton, as they approached the green, "and plenty of folk to witness the sport. Half my lads from Downham are here, and I see a good many of your Middleton chaps among them. How are you, Farmer Tetlow?" he added to a stout, hale-looking man, with a blooming countrywoman by his side—"brought your pretty young wife to the rush-bearing, I see."

"Yeigh, squoire," rejoined the farmer, "an mightily pleased hoo be w' it, too."

"Happy to hear it, Master Tetlow," replied Nicholas, "she'll be better pleased before the day's over, I'll warrant her. I'll dance a round with her myself in the hall at night."

"Theere now, Meg, whoy dunna ye may t' squoire a curtsey, wench, an thonk him," said Tetlow, nudging his pretty wife, who had turned away rather embarrassed by the free gaze of the Squire. Nicholas, however, did not wait for the curtsey, but went away, laughing, to overtake Richard Assheton, who had walked on.

"Ah, here's Frank Garside," he continued, espying another rustic acquaintance. "Halloa, Frank, I'll come over one day next week, and try for a fox in Easington Woods. We missed the last, you know. Tom Brockholes, are you here? Just ridden over from Sladeburn, eh? When is that shooting match at the bodkin to come off, eh? Mind, it is to be at twenty-two roods' distance. Ride over to Downham on Thursday next, Tom. We're to have a footrace, and I'll show you good sport, and at night we'll have a lusty drinking bout at the alehouse. On Friday, we'll take out the great nets, and try for salmon in the Ribble. I took

some fine fish on Monday—one salmon of ten pounds' weight, the largest I've got the whole season. I brought it with me to-day to the Abbey. There's an otter in the river, and I won't hunt him till you come, Tom. I shall see you on Thursday, eh?"

Receiving an answer in the affirmative, Squire Nicholas walked on, nodding right and left, jesting with the farmers, and ogling their pretty wives and daughters.

"I tell you what, cousin Dick," he said, calling after Richard Assheton, who had got in advance of him, "I'll match my dun nag against your gray gelding for twenty pieces, that I reach the boundary line of the Rough Lee lands before you to-morrow. What, you won't have it? You know I shall beat you—ha! ha! Well, we'll try the speed of the two tits the first day we hunt the stag in Bowland Forest. Odds my life!" he cried, suddenly altering his deportment, and lengthening his visage, "if there isn't our parson here. Stay with me, cousin Dick, stay with me. Give you good day, worthy Mr. Dewhurst," he added, taking off his hat to the divine, who respectfully returned his salutation, "I did not look to see your reverence here, taking part in these vanities and idle sports. I propose to call on you on Saturday, and pass an hour in serious discourse. I would call to-morrow, but I have to ride over to Pendle on business. Tarry a moment for me, I pray you, good cousin Richard. I fear, reverend sir, that you will see much here that will scandalise you; much lightness and indecorum. Pleasanter far would it be to me to see a large congregation of the elders flocking together to a godly meeting, than crowds assembled for such a profane purpose. Another moment, Richard. My cousin is a young man, Mr. Dewhurst, and wishes to join the revel. But we must make allowances, worthy and reverend sir, until the world shall improve. An excellent discourse you gave us, good sir, on Sunday—viii. Rom. 12 and 13 verses: it is graven upon my memory, but I have made a note of it in my diary. I come to you, cousin, I come. I pray you walk on to the Abbey, good Mr. Dewhurst, where you will be right welcome, and call for any refreshment you may desire—a glass of good sack, and a slice of venison pasty, on which we have just dined—and there is some famous old ale, which I would commend to you, but that I know you care not, any more than myself, for creature comforts. Farewell, reverend sir. I will join you ere long, for these scenes have little attraction for me. But I must take care that my young cousin falleth not into harm."

And as the divine took his way to the Abbey, he added, laughingly, to Richard—a good riddance, Dick. I would not have the old fellow play the spy upon us. Ah, Giles Mercer," he added, stopping again—"and Jeff Rushton—well met, lads! what, are you come to the wake? I shall be at John Lawe's in the evening, and we'll have a glass together. John brews sack rarely, and spareth not the eggs."

"Boh yo'n be at th' dauncing at th' Abbey, squoire," said one of the farmers.

"Curse the dancing!" cried Nicholas, "I hope the parson didn't hear me," he added, turning round quickly. "Well, well, I'll come down when the dancing's over, and we'll make a night of it." And he ran on to overtake Richard Assheton.

By this time the respective parties from the Abbey and the Vicarage having united, they walked on together, Sir Ralph Assheton, after courteously exchanging salutations with Dr. Ormerod's guests, still keeping a

little in advance of the company. Sir Thomas Metcalfe comported himself with more than his wonted haughtiness, and bowed so superciliously to Mistress Robinson that her two sons glanced angrily at each other, as if in doubt whether they should not instantly resent the affront. Observing this, as well as what had previously taken place, Nicholas Assheton stepped quickly up to them, and said,

"Keep quiet, lads. Leave this dunghill cock to me, and I'll lower his crest."

With this he pushed forward, and elbowing Sir Thomas rudely out of the way, turned round, and instead of apologising, eyed him coolly and contemptuously from head to foot.

"Are you drunk, sir, that you forget your manners?" asked Sir Thomas, laying his hand upon his sword.

"Not so drunk but that I know how to conduct myself like a gentleman, Sir Thomas," rejoined Nicholas, "which is more than can be said for a certain person of my acquaintance, who, for aught I know, has only taken his morning pint."

"You wish to pick a quarrel with me, Master Nicholas Assheton, I perceive," said Sir Thomas, stepping close up to him, "and I will not disappoint you. You shall render me good reason for this affront before I leave Whalley."

"When and where you please, Sir Thomas," rejoined Nicholas, laughing. "At any hour, and at any weapon, I am your man."

At that moment, Master Potts, who had scented a quarrel afar, and who would have liked it well enough if its prosecution had not run counter to his own interests, quitted Roger Nowell, and ran back to Metcalfe, and plucking him by the sleeve, said, in a low voice,

"This is not the way to obtain quiet possession of Raydale House, Sir Thomas. Master Nicholas Assheton," he added, turning to him, "I must entreat you, my good sir, to be moderate. Gentlemen, both, I caution you that I have my eye upon you. You well know there is a magistrate here, my singular good friend and honoured client, Master Roger Nowell, and if you pursue this quarrel further, I shall hold it my duty to have you bound over by that worthy gentleman in sufficient securities to keep the peace towards our sovereign lord the king and all his lieges, and particularly towards each other. You understand me, gentlemen?"

"Perfectly," replied Nicholas. I drink at John Lawe's to-night, Sir Thomas."

So saying, he walked away. Metcalfe would have followed him, but was withheld by Potts.

"Let him go, Sir Thomas," said the little man of law; "let him go. Once master of Raydale, you can do as you please. Leave the settlement of the matter to me. I'll just whisper a word in Sir Ralph Assheton's ear, and you'll hear no more of it."

"Fire and fury!" growled Sir Thomas. "I like not this mode of settling a quarrel; and unless this hot-headed, psalm-singing puritan apologises, I shall assuredly cut his throat."

"Or he yours, good Sir Thomas," rejoined Potts. "Better sit in Raydale Hall, than lie in the Abbey vaults."

"Well, we'll talk over the matter, Master Potts," replied the knight.

"A nice morning's work I've made of it," mused Nicholas, as he walked along; "here I have a dance with a farmer's pretty wife, a dis-

course with a parson, a drinking-bout with a couple of clowns, and a duello with a blustering knight on my hands. Quite enough, o' my conscience! but I must get through it the best way I can. And now, hey for the May-pole and the morris-dancers!"

Nicholas just got up in time to witness the presentation of the May Queen to Sir Ralph Assheton and his lady, and like every one else he was greatly struck by her extreme beauty and natural grace.

The little ceremony was thus conducted. When the company from the Abbey drew near the troop of revellers, the usher taking Alizon's hand in the tips of his fingers as before, strutted forward with her to Sir Ralph and his lady, and falling upon one knee before them, said—"Most worshipful and honoured knight, and you his lovely dame, and you the tender and cherished olive branches growing round about their tabs, I humbly crave your gracious permission to present unto your honours our chosen Queen of May."

Somewhat fluttered by the presentation, Alizon yet maintained sufficient composure to bend gracefully before Lady Assheton, and say in a very sweet voice, "I fear your ladyship will think the choice of the village hath fallen ill in alighting upon me; and, indeed, I feel myself altogether unworthy the distinction; nevertheless I will endeavour to discharge my office fittingly, and therefore pray you, fair lady, and the worshipful knight, your husband, together with your beauteous children, and the gentles all by whom you are surrounded, to grace our little festival with your presence, hoping you may find as much pleasure in the sight as we shall do in offering it to you."

"A fair maid, and modest as she is fair," observed Sir Ralph, with a condescending smile.

"In sooth is she," replied Lady Assheton, raising her kindly, and saying, as she did so,

"Nay, you must not kneel to us, sweet maid. You are Queen of May, and it is for us to show respect to you during your day of sovereignty. Your wishes are commands; and, in behalf of my husband, my children, and our guests, I answer, that we will gladly attend your revels on the green."

"Well said, dear Nell," observed Sir Ralph. "We should be churlish, indeed, were we to refuse the bidding of so lovely a queen."

"Nay, you have called the roses in earnest to her cheek, now, Sir Ralph," observed Lady Assheton, smiling. "Lead on, fair queen," she continued, "and tell your companions to begin their sports when they please. Only remember this, that we shall hope to see all your gay troop this evening, at the Abbey, to a merry dance."

"Where I will strive to find her majesty a suitable partner," added Sir Ralph. "Stay, she shall make her choice now, as a royal personage should; for you know, Nell, a queen ever chooseth her partner, whether it be for the throne or for the brawl. How say you, fair one? Shall it be either of our young cousins, Joe or Will Robinson, of Raydale? Or our cousin, who still thinketh himself young, Squire Nicholas, of Downham?"

"Ay, let it be me, I implore of you, fair queen," interposed Nicholas.

"He is engaged already," observed Richard Assheton, coming forward. "I heard him ask pretty Mistress Tetlow, the farmer's wife, to dance with him this evening at the Abbey."

A loud laugh from those around followed this piece of information, but Nicholas was in no wise disconcerted.

"Dick would have her choose him, and that is why he interferes with me," he observed. "How say you, fair queen! Shall it be our hopeful cousin? I will answer for him that he danceth the coranto and lavolta indifferently well."

On hearing Richard Assheton's voice, all the colour had forsaken Alizon's cheeks; but at this direct appeal to her by Nicholas it returned with additional force, and the change did not escape the quick eye of Lady Assheton.

"You perplex her, cousin Nicholas," she said.

"Not a whit, Eleanor," answered the squire; "but if she like not Dick Assheton, there is another Dick, Dick Sherburne, of Sladeburn; or our cousin Jack Braddyll; or, if she prefer an older and discreeter man, there is Father Greenacres, of Worsten, or Master Roger Nowell, of Read—plenty of choice."

"Nay, if I must choose a partner, it shall be a young one," said Alizon.

"Right, fair queen, right," cried Nicholas, laughing. "Ever choose a young man if you can. Who shall it be?"

"You have named him yourself, sir," replied Alizon, in a voice which she endeavoured to keep firm, but which, in spite of all her efforts, sounded tremulously—"Master Richard Assheton."

"Next to choosing me, you could not have chosen better," observed Nicholas, approvingly. "Dick, lad, I congratulate thee."

"I congratulate myself," replied the young man. "Fair queen," he added, advancing, "highly flattered am I by your choice, and shall so demean myself, I trust, as to prove myself worthy of it. Before I go I would beg a boon from you—that flower."

"This pink?" cried Alizon. "It is yours, fair sir."

Young Assheton took the flower and took the hand that offered it at the same time, and pressed the latter to his lips, while Lady Assheton, who had been made a little uneasy by Alizon's apparent emotion, and who with true feminine tact immediately detected its cause, called out—"Now forward—forward to the May-pole! We have interrupted the revel too long."

Upon this, the May Queen stepped blushingly back with the usher, who, with his white wand in hand, had stood bolt upright behind her, immensely delighted with the scene in which his pupil—for Alizon had been tutored by him for the occasion—had taken part. Sir Ralph then clapped his hands loudly, and at this signal the tabor and pipe struck up; the Fool and the Hobby-horse, who, though idle at the time, had indulged in a little quiet fun with the rustics, recommenced their gambols; the Morris-dancers their lively dance; and the whole train moved towards the May-pole, followed by the rush-cart, with all its bells jingling, and all its garlands waving.

As to Alizon, her brain was in a whirl, and her bosom heaved so quickly, that she thought she should faint. To think that the choice of a partner in the dance at the Abbey had been offered her, and that she should venture to choose Master Richard Assheton! She could scarcely credit her own temerity. And then to think that she should give him a flower, and, more than all, that he should kiss her hand in return for it! She

felt the tingling pressure of his lips upon her fingers still, and her little heart palpitated strangely.

As she approached the May-pole, and the troop again halted for a few minutes, she saw her brother James, holding little Jennet by the hand, standing in the front line to look at her.

"Oh, how I'm glad to see you here, Jennet!" she cried.

"An ey'm glad to see yo, Alizon," replied the little girl. "Jem has towd me whot a grand partner you're to ha' this e'en. And she added, with playful malice, "Who was wrong whon she said the queen could choose Master Richard——"

"Hush, Jennet, not a word more," interrupted Alizon, blushing.

"Oh! ey dunna mean to vex ye, ey'm sure," replied Jennet. "Ey've got a present for ye."

"A present for me, Jennet," cried Alizon, "what is it?"

"A beautiful white dove," replied the little girl.

"A white dove! Where did you get it? Let me see it," cried Alizon in a breath.

"Here it is," replied Jennet, opening her kirtle.

"A beautiful bird, indeed," cried Alizon. "Take care of it for me till I come home."

"Which winna be till late, ey fancy," rejoined Jennet, roguishly. "Ah!" she added, uttering a cry.

The latter exclamation was occasioned by the sudden flight of the dove, which escaping from her hold, soared aloft. Jennet followed the course of its silver wings, as they cleaved the blue sky, and then all at once saw a large hawk, which apparently had been hovering about, swoop down upon it, and bear it off. Some white feathers fell down near the little girl, and she picked up one of them and put it in her breast.

"Poor bird!" exclaimed the May Queen.

"Eigh, poor bird!" echoed Jennet, tearfully. "Ah, ye dunna knoa aw, Alizon."

"Weel, there's neaw use whimpering abowt a duv," observed Jem, gruffly. "Ey'n bring ye another t' furst time ey go to Cown."

"There's nah another bird like that," sobbed the little girl. "Shoot that cruel hawk fo' me, Jem, win ye."

"How conney wench, whon it's flown away," he replied. "Boh ey'n rob a hawk's neest fo' ye if that'll do os weel.

"Yo dunna understand me, Jem," replied the child, sadly.

At this moment, the music, which had ceased while some arrangements were made, commenced a very lively tune, known as "Round about the May-pole," and Robin Hood taking the May Queen's hand, led her towards the pole, and placing her near it, the whole of her attendants took hands, while a second circle was formed by the morris-dancers, and both began to wheel rapidly round her, the music momently increasing in spirit and quickness. An irresistible desire to join in the measure seized some of the lads and lasses around, and they likewise took hands, and presently a third, and still wider circle was formed, wheeling gaily round the other two. Other dances were formed here and there, and presently the whole green was in movement.

"If you come off heart-whole to-night, Dick, I shall be surprised," observed Nicholas, who with his young relative had approached as near the May-pole as the three rounds of dancers would allow them.

Richard Assheton made no reply, but glanced at the pink which he had placed in his doublet.

"Who is the May Queen?" inquired Sir Thomas Metcalfe, who had likewise drawn near, of a tall man holding a little girl by the hand.

"Alizon, dowter of Elizabeth Device, an mey sister," replied James Device, gruffly.

"Humph!" muttered Sir Thomas, "she is a well-looking lass. And she dwells here—in Whalley, fellow?" he added.

"Hoo dwells i' Whalley," responded Jem, sullenly.

"I can easily find her abode," muttered the knight, walking away.

"What was it Sir Thomas said to you, Jem?" inquired Nicholas, who had watched the knight's gestures, coming up.

Jem related what had passed between them.

"What the devil does he want with her?" cried Nicholas. "No good I'm sure. But I'll spoil his sport."

"Say boh t' word, squoire, an ey'n break every boan i' his body," remarked Jem.

"No, no, Jem," replied Nicholas. "Take care of your pretty sister, and I'll take care of him."

At this juncture, Sir Thomas, who, in spite of the efforts of the pacific Master Potts to tranquillise him, had been burning with wrath at the affront he had received from Nicholas, came up to Richard Assheton, and noticing the pink in his bosom, snatched it away suddenly.

"I want a flower," he said, smiling at it.

"Instantly restore it, Sir Thomas!" cried Richard Assheton, pale with rage, "or ——"

"What will you do, young sir?" rejoined the knight, tauntingly, and plucking the flower in pieces. "You can get another from the fair nymph who gave you this."

Further speech was not allowed the knight, for he received a violent blow on the chest from the hand of Richard Assheton, which sent him reeling backwards, and would have felled him to the ground if he had not been caught by some of the bystanders. The moment he recovered, Sir Thomas drew his sword, and furiously assaulted young Assheton, who stood ready for him, and after the exchange of a few passes, for none of the bystanders dared to interfere, sent his sword whirling over their heads through the air.

"Bravo, Dick," cried Nicholas, stepping up, and clapping his cousin on the back, "you have read him a good lesson, and taught him that he cannot always insult folks with impunity, ha! ha!" And he laughed loudly at the discomfited knight.

"He is an insolent coward," said Richard Assheton. "Give him his sword, and let him come on again."

"No, no," said Nicholas, "he has had enough this time. And if he has not, he must settle an account with me. Put up your blade, lad."

"I'll be revenged upon you both," said Sir Thomas, taking his sword, which had been brought him by a bystander, and stalking away.

"You leave us in mortal dread, doughty knight," cried Nicholas, shouting after him, derisively, "ha! ha! ha!"

Richard Assheton's attention was, however, turned in a different direction, for the music suddenly ceasing, and the dancers stopping, he learnt that the May Queen had fainted, and presently afterwards the crowd opened to give passage to Robin Hood, who bore her inanimate form in his arms.

THE MAN IN BLACK.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

THERE are no enjoyments like those of childhood—there are none so deeply regretted, so often looked back to, and so fondly remembered. They are peculiar to a period of life when the imagination is vivid—the heart alive to the warmest emotions. The season is one of gladness and mirth; its atmosphere is tinctured with the *coleur de rose*; it presents a thousand ever-varying beauties to the eye, and a rapid succession of pleasing novelties to the mind: beneath its genial influence the heart throbs in a tumult of joy and expectation. Each toy is a treasure we would not exchange for all the wealth in the world; each little design more important than all the affairs of the universe put together. Who does not remember his first hoop—who cannot recal the delight occasioned by Aunt Jane's present of the interesting little book with the coloured pictures? Who does not remember the swing—the brook—the orchard—the green—that have administered to his juvenile amusements? Finally, who does not remember the impression made by the first tale he ever listened to? Childhood is particularly a time of credulity and superstition. It is then that every hill, every glade, is the abode of fairies; every house, not occupied by persons in the flesh, the tenement of peripatetic apparitions. The imagination is for ever dwelling upon castles of enchantment, and beautiful princesses immured therein, and subject to the power of some cruel and detestable demon. The most implicit belief is attached to palaces of gold, whose floors were paved with silver, and whose appointments consisted in a great measure of costly diamonds and other precious stones. Impregnable castles, dark and melancholy dungeons, to which inexorable and carnivorous giants consigned their innocent and helpless captives, present themselves to our fancy with all the minute and fearful details of reality. Now our sympathy, now our indignation is aroused; for a moment we tremble with suspense, awaiting with the most feverish anxiety the issue of an adventure, upon which depends the happiness, the honour, the life, of some beautiful princess, endowed with more than human virtues and accomplishments. If the issue be favourable, our joy can only be equalled by that of the lady herself at her deliverance; if, on the contrary, it be unfavourable, we weep and lament the fate of one whose rare virtues entitled her to a less cruel and hapless destiny. As the truth of what is related is never for a moment questioned, our sorrow for the unfortunate heroes and heroines is not to be alleviated any more than our joy is to be diminished at the successes and prosperity to which they may attain. "Jack the Giant Killer" to us is an undoubted personage of history, and a very important one too. His valour, his achievements, have handed down his name with honour from one generation to another. His coat of darkness, his shoes of swiftness, are all matters of history, and are no more to be disputed than that the moon is inhabited by a man, who was placed there for having desecrated the Sabbath by gathering sticks on a Sunday—a fact, I think, pretty universally acknowledged by little nursery people in general.

There is no season so favourable for the enjoyment of fiction; we regard with no hypercritical or scrutinising eye the arrangement or

development of the plot: so long as it be interesting we heed not how inartistically, or with what appearance of improbability it may have been constructed. Unsophisticated, and without experience, we implicitly believe—our confidence is easily obtained. Dazzled by the entertainment spread before us, we have not yet been taught to doubt the substantial nature of the repast.

I have been led into these rambling reflections by the following narrative, which is associated with the period of life to which I have referred. It is one I have listened to a score of times with the closest attention; it is one which never recurs to me but conjures up to my mind the personal appearance of him who has been some years in his grave, whose memory I shall ever revere, and whose kindness and affection towards myself, shall never be forgotten.—*Requiescat in pace.*

My grandfather was in the habit of commencing the narrative thus:

It is now thirty years since the large stone mansion, which stands to the left of Marley Hill, was built. It presented a very different appearance at that time from what it does now. Since that period it has been enlarged; the grounds surrounding the house have been much improved, and the fine large trees which you now behold had only then been planted. The gentleman who built the house was a very singular character, and had suddenly come into the possession of immense wealth. He was a person of a very limited education, and his personal appearance was singular in the extreme. I remember him now as distinctly as if the occurrence I am about to relate was only of yesterday's date. He was below the middle height, and the rotundity of his person arrested the attention at once. I shall give you a pretty correct notion of his appearance when I state, that if a barber's block with a low crowned hat upon it, were placed upon a small barrel elevated upon a couple of sticks, two or three feet in length, and a cloak were thrown around it, the *tout ensemble* would be no mean resemblance to the person of old Jacob Gripley. His face was not a whit less remarkable. It was so red that it almost made you blush to look at it. He had an enormous nose, well ornamented with carbuncles, and his eyes were small, greyish, and cat-like. A great number of strange stories were circulated respecting Gripley, and some doubts were entertained as to whether he had come honestly by his money. It was even insinuated that a certain connexion subsisted between himself and an old gentleman of long standing and considerable antiquity, whom I need not describe more particularly. What grounds there were for such an hypothesis I know not, unless, indeed, it were the unaccountable way in which he appeared to have come into possession of his money. He had never been married, and always entertained a strong antipathy to the married state. His mansion was considered an open house for all his friends, and Gripley was frequently honoured with their company. There was a plentiful supply of good cheer on such occasions, which was always freely distributed amongst the guests. The squire (it was so that Griply was styled) was looked up to by the people in the surrounding neighbourhood with considerable deference. His wealth and his generosity had obtained for him many ardent admirers. Still mysterious insinuations were thrown out, and nods and winks were exchanged, all of which appeared to indicate that Jacob Gripley was not exactly *comme il faut.*

It was the custom of Gripley, during the winter evenings, to entertain at his house three or four of his most familiar friends. On these social evenings, an abundance of everything was provided; but, perhaps, there

was no article so much in request as tobacco. Jacob Gripley was a great smoker; his friends were great smokers; his servants, his tenants, his tradesmen, *cum multis aliis*, with whom he had dealings, were great smokers. It could not be otherwise. Gripley had no sympathy with a man who could not smoke his pipe; there was something radically wrong, he considered, in an individual who was unable to appreciate the enjoyment afforded by that exquisite sedative. Hence, any man that loved tobacco, Gripley loved, and *vice versâ*. Charles Lamb and he would not have quarrelled upon that point.

I was not one of Jacob Gripley's intimate friends, but I was, nevertheless, a congenial spirit. I loved my pipe. It happened one night I had occasion to call at his house. It was in November. The day had been very stormy, and a great quantity of snow had fallen. It was several feet deep in the country, and it was impossible for any conveyance to travel. When my name had been announced, Mr. Gripley came to the door to invite me in. I requested him to excuse me as I had promised my family to return early. He would not hear of any apologies, and I was obliged to yield to his solicitations. I was ushered into a large room with a stone floor, and which was commonly used as a place for general culinary purposes. There was a fine large fire blazing at the further end of the room, and round the hearth were placed half a dozen large oaken chairs, in three of which were deposited some of the intimate friends of Jacob Gripley. The kitchen was furnished in the ordinary way; on one side stood a dresser, upon which was placed a delf-rack filled with all kinds of crockery-ware. The walls of the room were hung round with the usual kitchen utensils, which were uncommonly bright and clean, and a credit to any housewife. Opposite the dresser stood a large deal table as white as snow. In the centre of the apartment was placed a small round table, on which stood a number of bottles, glasses, and jugs, which were appropriated to the use of the company assembled.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Gripley, introducing me, "this is Mr. Pennypinn. I need not say he possesses those qualities which entitle him to admission to our society."

"How do you do, Mr. Pennypinn? Glad to see you," said a little man with a red face, ruffled shirt, and buff waistcoat.

"Permit me, sir," said a corpulent man in a brown wig, and placing three great fat fingers, like overgrown carrots, into my hand.

"As a smoker, sir, you have at once a passport to our society," said the third man, who was very tall, and marked with the small-pox. "Allow me to say that I shall have no objection to cultivate your acquaintance." And he sank back in his chair with the air of a man who had made a very condescending admission.

I was a good deal struck with the formality with which my introduction had been accomplished. I had now time to look around me. I observed that each gentleman held in his hand an enormous pipe, from the tube of which large volumes of smoke were inhaled and again discharged from the mouth of the smoker. The utmost gravity prevailed, and not a word fell from the lips of any of the party. They were too much absorbed with their occupation. The curling wreaths of smoke appeared to have suggested certain trains of thought which had imposed the most impressive silence upon every one present. Their loquacious propensities were checked. The soothing weed seemed, like oil thrown upon the turbulent waters, to have hushed every emotion, and to have

spread a pleasing tranquillity over their whole demeanour. Life seemed to them of no moment; gaiety and boisterous enjoyment were accounted of little value; the power of speech and the intercommunication of ideas possessed little consideration in their esteem; the passions by which other men were actuated they had never experienced. They had but one object, one enjoyment, one occupation. They had formed but one attachment, to which they had steadily adhered through every vicissitude of fortune, and the pipe claimed their undivided affection.

These were the men that my partial predilection for tobacco had introduced me to; these were the men into whose society I had the happiness to be admitted.

I had sat some minutes observing Mr. Gripley and his friends, without venturing to make a remark. There was evidently no disposition for conversation. Mr. Gripley perceived my uneasiness, and, walking to a cupboard a short distance from him, he drew therefrom a long clay pipe, which, without saying a word, he placed in my hand, the man who sat next me at the same time handing me a large leaden jar, in which was deposited a plentiful supply of tobacco. I perfectly understood this pantomimic performance, and therefore filled and lighted my pipe in silence.

Half an hour had elapsed, and no one had spoken. At length the man with the red face and buff waistcoat disturbed the monotony.

"It is now five years," he said, in an undertone, and almost unconsciously.

"I beg your pardon, sir," I said, "to what do you refer?"

"Yes, five years have passed away," he repeated, without taking any notice of my inquiry, "since he was amongst us. Truly he was a great smoker!"

I conceived I should be intruding if I pushed my curiosity any further, so I remained silent.

"Mr. Gripley," he said aloud, "you have not forgot that occasion?"

The person addressed was unconscious that his guest had spoken.

"Gripley!" he cried, in a louder tone of voice.

"Sir," responded that gentleman, with alacrity.

"Have you forgot the night when that remarkable man was amongst us?"

"What night?—what man?"

"The night of the 25th of January, 1787."

"What man?" repeated Mr. Gripley.

"THE MAN IN BLACK," answered the little man, in a solemn and emphatic manner.

These words conveyed a species of electric shock to every person present. Until that moment the whole party, with the exception of Jacob Gripley and the man in the buff waistcoat, had been as silent as the grave. The quietness that had prevailed was oppressive. A mouse might have been heard to cross the floor, a pin to fall, so still, so absorbed in reflection, were, with the exceptions named, the gentlemen assembled. Not less surprising, not less curious, was the change produced by the utterance of these words than that effected in the castle of the Sleeping Beauty, when, after a long sleep of I know not how many hundred years, she and her whole household were in a moment restored to consciousness and activity. The words, simple as they were, produced a magical effect. To me they indicated nothing; to me they were as a sealed

book. What could they imply? What was the nature of that incomprehensible mystery which seemed to be attached to them? They were but words—ordinary words. They described the colour of a man's garments; there their utility ended. THE MAN IN BLACK! Gracious Heavens! what portentous meaning could four such insignificant words indicate? Was there anything remarkable in the colour? Was there anything unusual in persons being clad in "customary suits of solemn black?" On the contrary, they were the most becoming. Heavens! nine persons out of every ten wore them in the most civilised countries in the world. Had it been the Man in White, the matter would have been different. It might have been expected to excite surprise; it might have been expected to raise human curiosity to the highest pitch.

There are seasons when things of a comparatively insignificant nature will produce effects by no means in proportion with the means applied. A tone, a look, a gesture, may recal with painful accuracy certain periods of existence over which the mantle of oblivion might well be thrown. A strain of music, a flower, a landscape, may suddenly reveal to the mental eye "some bright spot on memory's waste" on which we love to dwell. It may be connected with our childhood, or, peradventure, with our maturer years. It may be associated with that period which occurs to most of people once in their lives, which has no counterpart in anything that went before, or in anything that comes after—that period when the flowers seemed to possess a richer perfume, their leaves a brighter hue; when the sky appeared to wear a softer, warmer tint; when Nature, indeed, wore her loveliest and most captivating aspect, and when the rich swell of music held in thrall the rapt and listening ear. Our impressions do not so much depend upon the objects upon which we gaze, as upon the lens through which they are exhibited to us. It was not that the sky was brighter; it was not that the flowers were fairer; it was not that the music was sweeter. It was the heart which, having for the first time become susceptible to the influence of love, coloured the objects around, and gave to each a hue transient and reflected.

I must apologise for this digression; but as a pedestrian in the course of his peregrinations, stumbling over a stone, sometimes stoops to examine it with eager curiosity, so the relater of a story may let slip an observation which may at once suggest a different train of thought from that which previously occupied his mind, and thus for a moment retard the progress of his narrative.

The words uttered by the gentleman in the buff waistcoat struck a chord in memory which seemed to recal to the minds of the gentlemen present some event of their past lives of the greatest importance. Their pipes fell from their mouths, and lay broken into a thousand atoms upon the floor; they silently stared at each other in the greatest consternation, and a clammy sweat became visible upon their bald foreheads.

"What said you?" at length inquired Jacob Gripley, his eyes flashing indignation.

"I mentioned THE MAN IN BLACK," replied the short gentleman, calmly.

"THE MAN IN BLACK!" echoed the corpulent gentleman, in the brown wig.

"Merciful Heaven! THE MAN IN BLACK!" exclaimed the tall man.

"I need not repeat my words, gentlemen," said the red-faced man, quite unmoved.

"The harmony of this company has been disturbed," said the stout gentleman.

"Mr. Tweedlethumb," said Jacob Gripley, "I'm sorry for this act of indiscretion; let it be forgotten. Gentlemen, here are plenty of pipes; I beseech you to make use of them."

The invitation was immediately accepted, and the usual silence again prevailed. I was a silent observer of these extraordinary proceedings, and though I felt the greatest curiosity to know who THE MAN IN BLACK was, and why the mention of him should produce so great a sensation, I was constrained to remain in total ignorance as to his character.

A considerable time passed away, and the silence remained unbroken. The fire was now beginning to burn less brightly; the light from the candles grew dim and feeble; and the whole place appeared less cheerful than before. Nothing was heard, save an occasional cricket upon the hearth, to disturb the deathlike stillness that prevailed. A mighty change suddenly came over the spirit of the entire company. They seemed spell-bound—their limbs were rigid—they were unable to move. Their eyes stared wildly, and the hair upon their heads stood erect. Their gaze was directed to one place—it was fixed upon one object. I turned my own towards it. I was appalled—I was scarcely able to breathe, and quite incapable of giving utterance to the agonising feelings by which I was oppressed. I observed that a chair, which during the evening had been empty, was now filled! It was occupied by a man in a black suit. He held a long, curiously-shaped pipe in his hand, from which he drew vast clouds of smoke. A low murmur at length ran through the company, and I fancied I heard these words, in an under tone, pass from one to another—

"THE MAN IN BLACK!"

I could not raise my eyes from this extraordinary phenomenon; and for a few minutes was incapable of the least locomotion. The cause of this alarm was either indifferent or insensible to the terror he had inspired. He was fixed as a statue — cold as the sculptured marble. His pipe was never once removed from his mouth, and he continued to draw from its long and spiral tube immense volumes of smoke, which floated and wreathed above his head, forming all kinds of odd combinations. I watched him with the most intense anxiety. I expected he would speak — change his position. I was mistaken. His limbs appeared to be inflexible. I was only conscious that he was alive by the vapour which he perpetually emitted from his mouth. I strove to catch a glimpse of his countenance, but I was unsuccessful; the dense smoke effectually concealed it from my view. I bethought me of his profile; the smoke was in front of him rather than around. I changed my position; I seated myself on his right hand, though at a suitable distance. He remained in the same attitude, and, apparently, without any effort on his part;—the vapour floated round to the side on which I sat, and completely defeated the object I had in view. I crossed to the other side, but the screen was as effectual as before. My curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. Who—what was this man, that he should thus wish to conceal his features? Was he a man? I now began to comprehend the terror which had been produced by the short gentleman in the buff waistcoat by the mention of THE MAN IN

BLACK! This was THE MAN IN BLACK!—this was he, without question. His sombre garments—his capacity as a smoker—the surprise and alarm of the company—all seemed to strengthen the hypothesis. What was his object in intruding upon the company? His society was not desirable; he was not sociable; he was not, apparently, a friend of Mr. Gripley; he was not invited; and, notwithstanding his proficiency as a smoker, he was evidently not respected by any member of the company. Other reflections instantly suggested themselves. How had he gained ingress to the mansion? The hall-door, I had understood, was already barred and locked. How had he been able to enter the room and deposit himself in the chair, without having been observed? These questions were difficult to answer: it was sufficient, the man was there. He had come there mysteriously; nobody knew when—nobody knew how!

For a moment, I raised my eyes from the object on which they had so long been fixed, and I discovered that the other gentlemen had gone. I was solitary and miserable. I alone was left to *his* society—I alone was made the companion of—whom? THE MAN IN BLACK. I was convinced that it was he—nay, it could be no other. For hours and hours my eyes were intently rivetted upon him. I made myself sure that some change would take place in his attitude, which would clear up the mystery with which he was surrounded. It was not so. To my great surprise, he continued to smoke with unabated vehemence, and, strange to say, his pipe never required replenishing. The bowl seemed to be inexhaustible, and to be stored with a supply which experienced no diminution. The tube was twisted in the most singular manner, and which I could not help regarding with great curiosity. Whilst my eyes were carefully scrutinising it, my attention was suddenly attracted to the bowl. I imagined it underwent a change, which, however, was momentary. I fancied a small transparent spot became visible in the centre, but which almost immediately disappeared. I watched it more closely, but I observed nothing further. I kept my eyes, however, fixed upon it, and at length the pipe displayed the same singular phenomenon, but on a much larger scale, and which in this instance was not evanescent. The bowl of the pipe, which was somewhat large, grew quite red, and the glow which proceeded from it in some measure illumined the room, which had for some time been in almost total darkness, the candles having long since expired and the fire in the grate throwing little light into the chamber. The fire by which the bowl was illuminated enabled me to see it with more distinctness than I had as yet had an opportunity of doing. It was of an oval formation, somewhat resembling the shape of those old-fashioned mirrors, which are now regarded as valuable relics of antiquity. The heat within grew more and more intense, and at last it became brilliantly transparent. The silence that prevailed was unbearable. I was almost choked, and the perspiration streamed from my face. The man smoked without intermission; the smoke as it ascended twisted itself into the most grotesque and ludicrous shapes. Oh! that the tick-ticking of some clock, or the sound of some blacksmith's forge could have been heard to break the awful silence that reigned around—a silence more fearful than the grave—a silence of which that of the chamber of death is but a faint and imperfect resemblance.

There was something singular about this pipe. Its shape was different from any I had as yet seen, and the bowl considerably larger. The vapour which was discharged from the man's mouth now arrested my attention. It did not ascend in the precise manner in which it had

previously done, but appeared to be endowed with the power of assuming the most fantastic and hideous combinations. Now it seemed like heavy masses of dark clouds, driven rapidly athwart the sky by a violent wind; now it assumed the appearance of a serpent, and coiled and wriggled itself into the most horrible contortions; anon it wore the appearance of a demon, whose head and body were encircled by myriads of scorpions. To my horror and consternation, the objects multiplied. Thousands and thousands of serpents, demons, and scorpions filled the air, and disported themselves around the head of the man, who remained as silent and as indifferent as ever. Shocked by the horrors by which I was encompassed, my eyes again sought the bowl of the pipe. My nerves were again put to the severest test. The most frightful countenance I had ever beheld was suddenly exhibited upon it. It was haggard and careworn—the cheek bones greatly projected—the eyes were sunken and dull—the skin pinched, yellow, and unwholesome. The expression of the countenance denoted suffering and despair. The lineaments at last gradually softened and assumed a somewhat mild and placid appearance, and slowly and almost imperceptibly disappeared from the pipe. The face was immediately replaced by another of a different character altogether. It was stout and well-conditioned, but the teeth were ground together and the lips closely compressed. The eyes shot forth flames of fire, and the expression of the face indicated rage and disappointment. The ferocity of the countenance, however, gradually relaxed as it slowly vanished from my sight. A third now presented itself. It was sad and melancholy; the eyes were dull and inflamed, and its appearance indicative of mental agony. In a similar manner to the preceding ones, its aspect became more composed before it faded from my view.

I could endure these sights no longer. I called aloud in my agony, and was determined to make an effort for my deliverance.

"What means this?" I demanded. "Speak—say, who are you?"

A hollow, sepulchral voice thus made answer:

"I am the minister and the vindicator of the tobacco plant—of that plant which is so highly valued and so much sought after by all races of mankind, and which has been one of the greatest boons to the whole human family—of that plant which possesses the power to calm the angry passions of men—soothe them under every distress, and reconcile them to the evils and discomforts which they are called upon to encounter in the course of their pilgrimage to a better land. I have already endeavoured to illustrate its virtues. The faces which you have seen cross the bowl of the pipe have been exhibited to you with this intention. The first countenance is symbolical of poverty—the second of anger—the third of grief and mental affliction. You will have observed, as each of these evils has been subjected to the influence of the tobacco, how the expression of the face has mollified—its features relaxed, and how, before it finally disappeared from the pipe, it has put on an air of comparative resignation."

Delighted with this explanation, and grateful for the friendly manner in which it was given, I bent forward to shake hands with this benevolent man. In so doing I fell from my chair, and discovered that it was day. I had been dreaming.

Whenever I smoke a pipe this vision recurs to me, and my imagination is so vivid, that I frequently fancy I behold, in the empty chair opposite me, this identical MAN IN BLACK.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

BEING THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

Dacre.—How strange the chance
That unexpected thee should hither bring,
On this eventful night.

The Outlaw.

Some years ago, on a raw and gusty evening, in the month of September, I drove up to a roadside inn, which, at that time, rejoicing under the name of the Flying Childers, to all travellers journeying between —— and Bury St. Edmund's, professed to afford good accommodation. A more unpromising and uninviting exterior than the said Flying Childers presented, considering the size of the building, I have rarely looked upon. To those not thoroughly acquainted with the geography of the locality, it would appear at first sight to have been built with the view alone of securing, as a half-way house, the custom of travellers—by no means inconsiderable in number—journeying between the two towns. A nearer inspection, however—for the Flying Childers lay some hundred yards or more off the public road—would show that there was every indication of a nest of supporters lying in the hollow behind, the tower of a church at no great distance, and a faint canopy of smoke hanging over the trees which stood around it, indicating pretty plainly that the said inn was in a very favourable position to command the support of those who vegetated in the village, as well as those who journeyed on the highway.

I have already observed that its exterior was anything but prepossessing; I might add, that the interior was fully in unison. This I knew from having frequently pulled up for the purpose of giving my Rosinante a feed, and myself a glass of their best home-brewed, which, to say the least on't, was a very prime article, and of a verity in that part of the world a rarity; for wretched is the stuff generally vended under the cognomen of ale in the counties of Cambridge and Suffolk. I say that the interior of the Flying Childers was such as you would be prepared to find from its outward appearance, and had it not been when I was within half a mile of the inn that my horse, through overwork, gave indications of distress, and the night coming rapidly on, I should never have dreamt of seeking within its walls accommodation for the night. Indeed, such was my disinclination, that on my nag first showing symptoms of giving in, I entertained the thought of walking him the next ten miles, rather than trust myself to such haphazard comfort as I might find at the said inn, and my resolution so to do was only changed by the reflection that my Rosinante had, during the past week, been somewhat overtasked, and that to proceed farther would be downright injustice to his noble nature, and the faithfulness of his services during the many years I had called him mine.

Convinced on this point, and feeling assured from my former observations when calling at the house, that although their accommodation for bipeds was of an inferior and limited character, their stabling was excellent, with, as I at the moment imagined, a stoical indifference to my own

creature comforts, I drove up, as I have said, on a gusty September evening, to the door of this very unpromising-looking inn. I felt fully satisfied that my tired beast would fall into good hands; for in allusion to the ostler who officiated as horsekeeper to the Brilliant, which changed at the Flying Childers, I had heard Joliffe, who worked that once fast four, declare "old Sam could turn out *hosses* with any man in England." The secret of this was, that old Sam had his hobby like everybody else; and Sam's hobby was his love of horses. He was fond of, and took a pride in what he had to do for them. His whole world was bound in by horseflesh. He had no ideas beyond the stable and the coach; and probably no class of men were ever looked upon with more deadly dislike than the various troops of railway surveyors and their staffs, who were making their appearance in Sam's locality when I last saw him. Yes, Sam was indeed a connoisseur in horses. I have seen him walk round his cattle after they were harnessed to the Brilliant; and whilst Joliffe was engaged in the interior, on that business common to all coachmen pulling up at inns, he would inspect the team with the most scrupulous attention; if a single hair were turned, smoothing it carefully down, then stepping slowly backwards to contemplate with marvellous complacency the subjects of his care and pride.

But Joliffe drove good cattle, very different to those we see now-a-days, pairs and unicorns attached to coaches, which, under the names of Meteor, Wonder, Everlasting, &c., carry such striking satires on themselves.

To return to the Flying Childers.

My host had no fire lighted in his best sitting-room, as he was pleased to term it, when I entered, so, after seeing a bedroom, which was a tolerable place, I amused myself by watching Sam's operations on my steed, and engaged him in an amusing colloquy on his favourite subject, until I was informed the room was ready.

The room—the best room! Picture to yourself, reader, with the prospect of a long winter's evening before you, a rather spacious apartment with bare walls, its floor scarcely covered by a scanty, and in some parts dilapidated, carpet, a table covered by a cloth which had evidently once borne a pattern, but which was so stained and defaced by sundry visitations of various liquors, that you might as well have searched to find the original colour of the cloth, as the device which it once had borne. There was certainly a good fire, and the mantel-piece displayed a number of what in my hostess's eye were, doubtless, ornaments, consisting of diminutive wax figures in little dirty glass cases; the same questionable taste that had so installed them had, no doubt, also presided over the bestowal of a border of bright yellow paint, which, on a black oak ground, circled a rather antique mirror, adorning the wall over the fireplace. Books, I had none with me; what was I to do to kill the hours until bedtime? A dirty-looking volume lying on a sideboard, as it met my gaze, for the moment elated me with the hope that it might prove something curiously rare—a fall of manna in the wilderness. Alas! it was but an old battered "Directory;" and on examining it I found, as a matter of course, that it was deficient of those pages which had once graced it, containing the names of the natives and general statistics of the parish in which I was sojourning, and which I will here call Sandy Hollow.

It would be no easy task to learn the true motive which instigates this

stupid piece of mischief so generally practised; certain it is, that three-fourths of the "Directories" to be found at inns are despoiled of those pages relating to their own locality, or, if not torn from the book, are so defaced as to be scarcely legible. The once useful compilation belonging to the Flying Childers formed, as I have observed, no exception to the rule; there was, indeed, a full, true, and particular account of the whole county, save and except the identical part once devoted to the place of my sojourn.

The last page of the mutilated work now appeared where the topographical and statistical information relative to the place in which the Flying Childers was situated had once commenced. Here, some one, probably a casual sojourner like myself, had scribbled *memoriæ sacrum* of Sandy Hollow.

Somewhat annoyed, I threw down the book, for it had occurred to me, whilst cogitating how I should contrive to despatch the time until it should be a fitting hour to seek an interview with Mr. Morpheus, that a Captain B——, the father of an old schoolfellow of mine, had chosen the *locale* for his residence, some years past, when my intimacy with his son terminated by the latter going abroad. I expected to have found his name in the Directory, and, in consulting it for that purpose, felt half-inclined, should his residence be within a tolerable distance, to pay him a visit.

"It was certainly a long time ago," I ruminated, whilst gazing in the fire and sipping a mixture of something which I tried to persuade myself was sherry negus, such as I had ordered—"a long time ago since I had seen my friend's father;" but my recollections were such as induced me strongly to entertain the idea of calling on him, rather than pass the evening in so cheerless and dreary a place as the best room of this highway inn. When we were lads together, I had been a frequent guest at my friend Frank's home, and with what interest did I now recal the young, fast-fleeting days that I had passed under his father's hospitable roof! How sweet are reveries of the past! how sweet to pause at times amidst the whirl and hurlyburly of every-day life, with all it stern realities, and, winging fancy to by-gone hours, live them with all their sunshine o'er again; beholding forms undying in memory; and listening to voices whose melody, alas! is hushed for ever. Thus, in the eloquent language of Wilson, "may one moment minister to years, and the life-wearied heart of old age, by one delightful remembrance, be restored to primal joy; the glory of the past brought beamingly upon the faded present, and the world that is obscurely passing away from our eyes re-illumined with the visions of its early morn."

Since the days on which I so fondly dwelt in my reverie, the captain had married a second wife, changed his residence, and Frank, the first friend of my heart, had been wrecked and lost on his passage out to India. It was so long ago, I reflected, the chances are that the captain has forgotten me. How unpleasant, too, to go through the ordeal of self-introduction, whilst there existed even a possibility of not being welcome; nay, more, it flashed across my memory I had somewhere heard the captain's last wife was a bit of a termagant, and, indeed, had been the cause of poor Frank's going abroad. And this remembrance was almost decisive. "I'll stay where I am," mentally I exclaimed; drawing my chair closer to the fire, and endeavouring to feel quite satisfied that second

thoughts are always the best. It took, however, some little time, after hearing argument on both sides, to come to this decision. On the one hand, there was a cheerless room, no company, no books, miserable fare, perchance, if I ventured to order supper; and, withal, the melancholy night-wind fitfully wailing round the building, and at times shaking the old shutters with a rattle that made my heart leap within me: on the other hand, there was the chance of enjoying the captain's society, his comfortable drawing-room, reminiscences of dear old times, his pictures, and his port.

On coming to the conclusion to remain where I was, I again reviewed my position in the Flying Childers, and vigorously tried to persuade myself that the quarters were not so bad. My host had, perhaps, a little library somewhere in the house, perchance amongst his collection some choice old black-lettered volume might reveal itself, and, cheered by the thought, I rang the bell, determined to order mental and physical refreshment together. My hostess, who answered the bell, was a tidy-looking little body, clean and countrified, and so truly unsophisticated in manner, as led me to infer that she had never extended her researches into the world beyond the knowledge of it afforded by the daily occurrences of Sandy Hollow and the Flying Childers.

As, of my two requirements, food for the mind was uppermost in my thoughts, when, in obedience to my summons, the hostess entered the room, it will not appear singular that my inquiry should be—

"Have you any books in the house?"

"Rooks, sir," replied the landlady, with a look of amazement; "rooks, sir?"

Innkeepers, be it observed, and waiters in general, have an impression on their craniums, as though it had been engraved there, that eating and drinking form the most important occupations in life, and are rarely prepared to reply to questions on other heads than the all-engrossing subject of victualling. Some years ago I was witness to an amusing illustration of this, in one of the large hotels in the north of England. The omnibus which runs from the railway-station had barely deposited its passengers at the door, when a tall, portly gentleman walked into the room where I was sitting, and after divesting himself of his travelling coat, and giving orders to Boots respecting his luggage, drew up a chair to the fire and rang the bell.

"Waiter," said he, as that functionary entered the room, and speaking rather rapidly, but, to my tympanum, very distinctly, "waiter, what papers do you take in?" adding, without stopping for a reply to his question, "if you have to-day's *Times*, let me see it directly."

Waiters in large inns, as some of my readers may have noticed, often affect to be wonderfully alert, which is not unfrequently carried to an extreme.

"Yezur," they often exclaim, before you have well given your instructions, affecting an aptitude and smartness in comprehending your wants, and vanishing when your drawing breath is perhaps but a breathing comma in the sentence you are delivering, bringing you to a full stop ere you have more than half expressed your wishes. "Yezur," said the worthy in question, ere the portly traveller had ceased speaking, and was out of the room in a twinkling.

Ere the gentleman, however, had quite stretched out his legs at the

fire, the waiter returned, and advancing close up to him, thus delivered himself:

"Soup, ox-tail and mock-turtle; fish, salmon and sole; beef, roast and boiled; leveret, chicken; hashed——"

"Hashed be hanged!" roared out the infuriated traveller, starting up in a rage from his chair. "I asked you for the *Times* paper. Curse you, waiters, you can't think it possible for a man to want anything but to be always stuffing and swilling. I want the *Times* paper, I tell you; curse your hash!"

"Rooks, sir!" exclaimed the presiding genius of the Flying Childers, with a look of amazement.

"No, you mistake me," I replied, half laughing, the circumstance related occurring to me at the moment. "No, I said books—books to read. I shall also want some supper in an hour or so; pray what can you give me?" My hostess retired to consult the larder, and at the same time to search for any volume the house might contain.

"Yes, I am booked here for the night," I mentally exclaimed, whilst applying the poker to the fire, making it blaze and sparkle quite cheerily over the room, producing an exhilarating though transient effect on my spirits. "The quarters are not so very bad, after all," I thought; "the books that may turn up, the nice supper that they probably may give me. Ah! these country inns; did I not know how snugly they could do a bird occasionally?"

Alas! for my hopes, my hostess returned; they had no books at all in the place, and, with regard to supper, there was nothing left but cold mutton. Should she cook me some eggs and bacon? In utter despair, I ordered the latter to be ready in an hour, and after two or three turns across the room, sat down again to cogitate whether I should not, after all, seek out and venture on a visit to Captain B——. My hostess must have thought me a restless sort of being, for she had not long left me ere I again summoned her to my presence. The residence of the captain, it appeared, was not more than half-an-hour's walk distant, lying to the left of the village. The landlady could give me no information relative to the members composing his family; indeed, she knew but very little about them, as they had come to reside there since she was married, which, she informed me, was the time when she had left the village for the Flying Childers.

Only half-an-hour's walk! What though it was night, and the road unknown to me, I resolved upon going, and slipping on an overcoat, with a trusty blackthorn in my hand, I issued forth from the inn.

"Keep straight down the lane, sir," said my hostess, who had accompanied me to the door to give me the required directions; "keep straight on till you come to the common, which you must leave to your right, and take the other road round by the mill, and it will take you, in about a quarter of a mile farther, to the house; you will see it among the trees. You had better let Sam go with you, sir."

"No," said I, "the distance is so short, and your directions so plain, I shall not need him. Should I not return in an hour, give Sam the eggs and bacon, and tell him to sit up for me until twelve; should I not return by that time, he need not wait longer, but go to bed." So saying, and buttoning my coat closely round me, with a "Good night" to my hostess, I sallied forth from the Flying Childers.

It was, indeed, a dreary night, the wind had increased in violence, and was now howling furiously; dark masses of cloud were careering along the heavens, allowing a crescent moon, and a solitary star here and there, occasionally to peep forth, as though to reveal how rapid was their flight. The air, too, had become very chilly, and I began to congratulate myself in not having pushed on my jaded steed, now so comfortably housed, and myself with something of a prospect of getting into comfortable quarters. There was no difficulty in following the directions I had received, and within half-an-hour from the time of starting I found myself at the house. By the imperfect light afforded, the dwelling appeared to be one of those old-fashioned, gabled, irregular buildings which here and there are seen scattered over the country, mementos of olden times. It seemed nicely situated, well protected on three sides by a deep belt of trees, with a fine sweep of lawn in front, which, by the dimly-seen grouping of the shrubs, I judged to be tastefully ornamented.

With not a little pleasure I learned from the domestic who answered my summons at the door, that the captain was at home, and following the presentation of my card, I was immediately ushered into his presence.

I will not dwell on the first moments of my meeting with the father of my old schoolfellow; enough to say, that he well and right-gladly remembered me, that the associations which my presence called up brought more than one tear to his eye, and that his voice faltered, veteran as he was, as he grasped my hand in both of his hands whilst bidding me welcome.

There was no reserve about him. I had not sat ten minutes beside his hearth, ere he had communicated to me the leading events of his life since I had last seen him. The principal part I was already in possession of from other sources, and that was Frank's death. It appeared that some few months after the captain's second marriage, having had some words with his stepmother, and an appointment abroad offering itself at the time, my old schoolfellow resolved upon accepting it, his father in vain endeavouring to dissuade him. I have before related that, on his passage out, he met with his death. The captain showed me a letter which Frank had written to him on the day of his embarkation, replying to his father's last written appeal against his departure, in a tone of firm resolution and confidence, yet breathing withal, to him, the warmest affection throughout; I perceived by the crumpled and worn state of the paper, it was a dear memento, and that the captain had many a time and oft read it o'er and o'er again. My host had no family by his present wife, who, I learned, was on a visit with her relatives in the north of England, and that he purposed in a few days taking a trip himself to the same quarter to bring her home.

Desirous of dispelling the sadness which our reminiscences of the past had thrown around us, I led my host away from talking of his lost son, and not a little did I amuse him when describing my irresolution at the Flying Childers, and the complication of causes which led me in desperate resolve to seek him. He rallied me on my modesty, and ere we sat down to supper, so friendly had we become, that I had made a promise to spend a week with him in the following spring. I know not that I ever more readily accepted an invitation in my life, so cordial was the captain's manner, so much heart was there in all he said. Rapidly flew the time, the captain showing me all his curiosities, of which he was an enthusiastic collector, his pictures, and his books. More than once, whilst we were

thus occupied, my host regretted the absence of his man-servant, to whom it seemed he had given a couple of days' holiday to attend a sister's wedding in an adjoining county. He also showed me his favourite nag, and his stabling; and, after I had seen his fawn-and-white dog, which had recently borne off a coursing trophy, we returned to the house.

Being more snug, as he observed, than the drawing-room, my host now ushered me into his library, where a blazing fire, a goodly display of bottles and glasses, and a chess-board opened on the table, gave pretty clear indication that the captain had determined our companionship should not terminate very speedily. As I was a chess-player, and he passionately fond of the game, we had already arranged that I should give up all thoughts of returning to the Flying Childers, give my host battle, and take up my quarters for the night where I was.

After a round or two of the captain's port, to drink some old-fashioned toasts, and by way also, as my entertainer said, of preparing the palate for the true flavour of the next bottle, we sat down to the game.

The veteran, although much attached to chess, was not a first-rate player; we were about equally matched, our contest proving so interesting to both, that it was midnight when my host, with a fresh bottle, proposed another game.

I readily assented; a supply of wood was brought for the fire; my host then bade his servants go to bed, and we commenced another engagement. And thus we sat in the captain's old-fashioned library, in the dead of night, silently engrossed in mimic battle. So still, so hushed was all around that we could distinctly hear the village clock as it struck the quarters, and at intervals almost startling was the sound of a mouse rattling in the wainscot.

The servants had retired about half-an-hour; we had arrived at a critical part of the game; the captain, after a long deliberation, had taken up his remaining bishop to make a move, when, through the stillness of the building, broke a sound as of a door being forced from its hinges. The noise was but momentary, and was succeeded by the silence of the grave. The captain's hand remained suspended over the board; we looked at each other, but spoke not, moved not—scarcely breathed. For a moment or two we sat as though spell-bound.

"What can it be?" we at length exclaimed in a breath, rising together; and at the same moment again the noise broke through the stillness of the night.

"They are breaking in," said the captain.

"Have you pistols?" I inquired, both scarce speaking above our breath.

"Ay, but they are in my bedroom. Hark!"

A low whistle now rose on the air, as though proceeding from the back of the house; another, which seemed to come from the front, replied, and all again became still.

The room in which we sat was at the head of the grand staircase, and as the shutters were closed we at once concluded that our sitting up was not known to the burglars, for such they evidently were. It was a trying position, to meet which we both felt that all our nerve and coolness would be requisite. Our words were uttered in whispers, and in much less time than words can be written to tell it, we had decided on our plan of action. That such a daring attack would not be made unless there were numbers

we felt assured; although it was most probable they had ascertained the absence of the man-servant, and doubtless calculated on finding, besides the captain, none but women in the house.

My host was wonderfully cool and collected; we took off our boots, put out the lights, noiselessly took the logs off the fire, laying them apart on the hearth and extinguishing the flames, so that their light, gleaming from beneath the door, might not prate of our whereabout. The captain then left me to reconnoitre at the head of the stairs, whilst he sought his bedroom for the pistols. Scarcely had I taken up my position when I distinctly heard footsteps approaching towards the lobby from the back part of the house. What anxious moments were those; I thought my host would never return. So absorbed was I listening to the approach of the burglars, that ere I was aware of his approach, the old gentleman had rejoined me.

I breathed more freely on receiving the weapons which he placed in my hands, feeling assured, from the daring manner in which the ruffians were entering the place, that it would require something more than our showing ourselves to make them beat a retreat. The relief I experienced on the captain's return was, however, but transient, for in handling the pistols he had given me, I found they were uncapped, though loaded. In his hurry he had forgotten to examine his own, and he soon found that one only of the brace which he had retained for himself was so furnished. Barely had we made this unpleasant discovery, when we heard the burglars, who had now reached the lobby, conversing in a suppressed tone of voice, yet every syllable they uttered fell with painful distinctness on our ears.

"Where's the lantern?" said the fellow who appeared to be leading; "shove the slide, Ned, it's as black as the devil, and I can't feel no door."

"Husht! husht!" came from the ruffian bringing up the rear, and who in obedience to the other's request drew back the shade from his lantern, throwing a gleam of light forward, which, whilst it displayed to them the position of the rooms, revealed to us, who were with breathless interest watching their movements, the advancing figures of three men, whose faces were covered with black crape. Two of them carried formidable-looking bludgeons; the other appeared to be unarmed, until, in bending to open the dining-room door, the stock of a pistol, stuck in the breast of his coat, displayed itself.

"Could I but get to the blue-room, my caps are there," said the captain, as the ruffians disappeared in the dining-room.

"In what part of the house is it?" I inquired, with not a little anxiety.

"Within a dozen paces of the foot of these stairs," replied my host; "we must get them at all risks."

At this moment we heard the crash of splintering wood.

"They are forcing open the drawers," whispered the captain, "could we be sure they would remain but a few moments we might reach the room unseen."

We were on the point of advancing for the purpose, when the light from the burglar's lantern gleamed on the wall of the lobby opposite the dining-room door, and we had barely time to draw back ere they, evidently disappointed in their search, emerged from the apartment and advanced towards the stairs.

The captain at this juncture placed his hand on my arm, and just breathing the words, "Follow me!" he led me along the landing-place

until we came to the foot of the stairs which conducted to the story above. Drawing me with him, within a recess formed by the broad staircase, we cowered down amongst a lot of lumber and awaited the ruffians' approach. Whilst in this position we exchanged but few words, agreeing that they were determined characters we had to do with, and that it would be madness to show ourselves until we were in possession of the caps. Scarcely had we concealed ourselves, when the footsteps of the marauders announced that they had gained the head of the stairs which we had just quitted.

"To be sure," said one of them, as though supporting the proposition of a previous speaker, "have the old buffer out at once; curse me if I like this slow work."

"Ay, Ned, let's find him out," said another; "and if he isn't as nimble as nine-pence in shelling out, we'll make his bones dance a hornpipe in his skin. Here, Bill, give me the glim." Saying which, the speaker led the way, followed by the others, into a bedroom, where they were soon engaged forcing open drawers, and stowing away on their persons all the valuables they could conveniently carry.

Whilst they were thus occupied, the captain gave me a silent signal, and, together, we emerged from our hiding-place; in our hurry displacing some piece of lumber from its equilibrium, which, with a loud noise, fell to the ground. We did not pause a moment to mark what effect this might have produced on the marauders, but glided rapidly and noiselessly down the staircase.

"Thank God!" ejaculated my host, as groping about in the dark, in the blue room, he gained the object of his search; "here they are."

Having capped the pistols, a few words sufficed to determine our plan of action. We felt tolerably confident they were now in our hands. To capture one of the gang was to be a primary object; and it was agreed we were not to resort to the barkers unless they should show desperate fight. With this view, the captain furnished himself with a strong, lead-knobbed stick, which fortunately lay convenient; mine I found where I had deposited it on entering the house—in the hat-stand of the hall. This I carried in one hand, with the other one of the pistols, depositing its fellow in my jacket-pocket, ready for immediate use.

To secure one of the burglars being our principal object, so to surprise them, as to cause them to scatter, was to be the first attempt. Our arrangements were barely completed, when the screams of the women-servants rang through the house, informing us too plainly of the ruffians' progress. We ascended the stairs, and, listening at the foot of the flight of steps which led to the servants' bedrooms, heard the burglars, with horrid imprecations, threatening to murder them if they did not discover their master's retreat. The women were sobbing and begging for mercy, protesting they knew no more than they had already told.

"Come, no snivelling, mistress," said one of the ruffians; "if you can't show us your master, you can show where he keeps his money, and where the plate is, for we can't spare time to look for it. By all the devils in h—ll! if we don't get hold on't, we'll cut your throats."

By the scuffling of feet that followed, we found that they were descending the stairs with the women, exercising no longer caution in their movements, believing, doubtless, the captain, through fear, had concealed himself, and relying on the vigilance of their watchers outside the building.

That they had confederates we ascertained, from perceiving a window—which, from the landing where we stood commanded a view of the lawn in front—standing open. The ruffians, in ascending the stairs, had noticed it, and had evidently made use of it to communicate with their accomplices without. Conjecturing such to be the case, the captain put his head out at the window, when a voice from beneath exclaimed, "Well, have you nailed him?"

My host growled out something, which the querist might possibly have construed into "all right," and drew in his head.

"They are numerous," said he; "I'm afraid we shall find it necessary to use the pistols. Here they come. Back for a moment to our hiding-place." We cowered down again in the recess that had served us so well before.

They were now close upon us, continuing their brutal imprecations at the terrified women as they descended together the flight of stairs which we had just quitted. Fortunately for our object, one of the ruffians here left his fellows with the servants, and, passing so close to our hiding-place as almost to touch us, proceeded to the open window to speak to the watch without, to see that all was right, and to report progress.

We could distinctly catch the words which he addressed to his comrade outside—they were very brief; he turned from the window, but had scarcely moved a couple of paces ere the captain, giving me the signal for action, we together threw ourselves upon him. So sudden, unexpected, and impetuous was our onset, that the fellow's astonishment and terror for a moment deprived him of utterance, as well as power to resist. Without any difficulty we forced him to the floor, his heavy fall being the first intimation to his accomplices below that there was some check to the audacity of their proceedings. The prostration of the fallen burglar's nervous system was, however, but momentary, which he soon displayed by violent exertions to free himself, whilst vociferating to his fellows for help. Whilst assisting the captain to keep him down, I, at the same time, administered some very unmistakeable blows with my stick to the hand of the ruffian, which held a bludgeon, and which, through excess of pain, he was compelled to relinquish. No sooner was it in my possession than I threw it out of the window, thus depriving him, as we then thought, of his only weapon, as we found he carried no fire-arms.

This was all the work of a moment, and scarce had I thrown away the fellow's bludgeon, when the other two ruffians, drawn by his cries for help, appeared at the head of the staircase; the foremost of the two having in his right hand a pistol, which he held ready to fire.

"Blaze away," cried the captain, addressing me, whilst applying the stock of his weapon to the cranium of our fallen foe, who was now struggling with the energy of desperation. I did not hesitate a second, but fired immediately at the foremost man. At the same moment, he, observing my figure between him and the misty light which the window afforded, discharged his pistol. I felt the charge whizzing past my cheek, the effect of which announced itself in the crashing glass of the window behind me. My fire appeared to have been equally ineffectual, for they both rushed forward. The lantern, which one of them carried, he cast to the ground, to free both hands for close action.

For the next few moments it was a desperate encounter; the captain had disabled the ruffian we had first attacked from joining in the fray,

and springing to his feet as the two others rushed forward, we became equally engaged hand to hand.

Our two opponents were both armed with heavy bludgeons; fortunately for us, possessing no fire-arms beyond the piece which had been so ineffectually discharged.

Here we had an advantage. In addition to which they were evidently surprised, having no conception that they would meet with more than one to cope with. On advancing so daringly they had not seen the captain, or else supposing their comrade, who was grappling with him, would keep him in check, were hardly prepared to meet such an equal repulsion; and even then they bore upon us with a fearlessness and determination worthy of a better cause.

The encounter was, however, but of short duration. From the fellow who assailed me I received a severe blow on the arm; and had not my stick fortunately partly parried the force of the descending stroke, the bone would inevitably have been broken. Finding I stood no chance in this species of warfare with the burly fellow who pressed upon me, with my disengaged hand I drew forth my remaining pistol. At the same instant a discharge from one of the captain's barrels, and an exclamation of pain and terror from the ruffian he was combating, in conjunction with the appearance of my piece, operated like magic on my adversary, for he instantly turned and took to his heels, being scarce a second behind his companion, who, hit by the captain, had also taken flight down the stairs.

"Are you hurt?" was my gallant host's first inquiry.

"No. Are you?"

"Merely a scratch or two which this fellow has contrived to give me with a knife, which I soon stopped his using."

This was hurriedly spoken, whilst we were both endeavouring with our handkerchiefs to tie the arms of the remaining burglar, who, stunned by the blows which the captain had given him, lay almost passive.

"These handkerchiefs will never do," said my host; "he may come round, and the others return. Quick—tear down a bell-rope out of one of the rooms; we will secure this scoundrel, at all events, whether they come to the rescue or not."

Having bound our almost insensible captive to the banisters, we descended the stairs in pursuit of the discomfited burglars, and to show a bold front should they venture upon returning.

By the light of the lantern, which the ruffians had left behind them, a pretty close sprinkling of blood showed itself up to the door where they had broken in, and through which they had retreated, telling, in language unmistakeable, that one of them had indeed been winged. We did not extend our researches beyond the door, one of the women, who seemed almost frightened to death, here joining us. From excess of fear she had well nigh lost the power of speech, and it was some little time ere we gleaned from her, that when the burglars, hearing their comrade's cry, had left them, herself and fellow-servant had endeavoured to escape from the house, but having seen two men on the watch had run back again; that Mary had got out some way through the cellars she thought, but she had not sufficient courage to follow her.

"I trust she has got clear off," said the captain; "and if she has we shall have half the village here in no time."

We returned to our prisoner, who had partly recovered from the severe

visitation his skull had received, and he glowered upon us, as we approached, like a caged tiger. At my request, the captain now bared his wounded arm, when two gashes, inflicted by the ruffian's knife, revealed themselves. Under the circumstances, there are few who would have blamed my host, had he, in the struggle, instead of stunning, blown out the fellow's brains.

Whilst we were thus engaged, and endeavouring to devise some plan of proceeding until morning should bring us assistance, a tremendous uproar and the sound of voices announced the approach of a numerous body, and in a few moments some twenty people of the village, armed with a variety of weapons, came tumbling into the house, led by the housemaid, Mary, who it appeared had succeeded in effecting an escape and giving the alarm. Guarded by a number of these timely visitors, our prisoner, without loss of time, was conducted to the village, and safely secured in the strong room which served for a prison, under the immediate care of that lynx-eyed and important functionary, the head and only constable of Sandy Hollow. I may as well here observe, that from thence the prisoner in due course was introduced to the interior of the county gaol.

Whilst some of the rustics took charge of the captured burglar, others commenced an active search in the neighbourhood, which was unfortunately unattended with success. On making an examination, we discovered that the ruffians had, by means of a pole, scaled the yard wall in the rear of the building, and with a crowbar, which we found on the spot, had broken open the scullery door. There was but little reason to doubt that they were aware of the absence of the man-servant, and believing that, besides the captain, there was only female domestics in the house, had, doubtless, calculated on a safe and easy pillage.

Fortunately, amongst the reinforcement from the village, was the head assistant of the surgeon of the place, who dressed the captain's wounds, which, though ugly to look at, I was glad to hear were not dangerous.

During the following day I stayed with my gallant host, and in the evening, my horse having become itself again after its salutary rest, came forth from the stable, eager for work and brisk as a kitten. Enough to say, that he was turned out from the masterly hands of Sam, who, criticising his points, was high in his encomiums, and who, with a delighted eye, beheld him, obedient to my word, bound away like a bird from the door of the Flying Childers.

When I next met the captain, it was at the trial of the captured burglar, when the ruffian, having doggedly refused to betray his accomplices, was transported for life.

The events of the night which I have related have become a stock story—a standing dish with the captain. In his relation of the circumstances, he ever attributes to a Providential interposition the unlooked-for causes that led me to join him that night. That my horse should have shown symptoms of distress and exhaustion—the night become so boisterous—and the inn so destitute of everything in the shape of comfort—were, at all events, a fortunate combination of apparent untoward events. They were, indeed, as my gallant friend is wont to observe, the causes of giving him a companion, whose presence, in keeping him up beyond his customary hour of retiring to rest, had, in all probability, saved him from becoming a victim to "The Night Attack."

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Chapter XVII.

A FEVER of excitement prevailed throughout Brussels on the day appointed for the entrance of the confederate nobles. Scarcely where the gates thrown open, when a long file of horsemen, headed by Henry of Brederode and Louis of Nassau, rode through, and took their way towards the heart of the city. Besides the sword, then the ordinary badge of rank, each cavalier had two large petronels at his saddle bow—a circumstance which was remarked with no slight mistrust by the authorities.

The people, gradually increasing in numbers as the procession moved forward, almost impeded by their swarms the progress of the riders; and each throughfare, by-street, and lane yielded its tribute to the dense mass of human beings crowding round the confederates. It was observable, however, that there was a total absence of any demonstration of feeling on the part of the multitude, whether favourable or otherwise, if we except a vague, indefinite terror and amazement with which the greater portion appeared to be stricken.

But, apparently anxious to avoid creating any disturbance, the horsemen proceeded leisurely, and with great precaution, through the now advancing and now receding tide of the populace. Their progress was necessarily slow; and much time elapsed before they came to the Palace of Orange, in front of which they made a halt, when the two leaders, having dispersed their followers each to seek his quarters, or the friends who awaited him, entered the palace, and made for the apartments that had been prepared for them.

Although no less than four hundred men formed the body that had entered the city in a regular troop, the whole of that day solitary riders, whose costume betrayed neither their rank nor their business, were constantly dropping in; and most of them, it was remarked by the idle crowd that continued to gather in groups before one palace or another, took their way to that of Orange. Among these, a young cavalier was observed, whose countenance expressed annoyance at the impertinent curiosity of which he was the object. Attended by a single servant, whose dark, plain livery, displayed the colours of no noble house, he was endeavouring to force his way more speedily than was practicable through the shoals of people, of different ages and sexes, who encumbered the streets. At length, fairly wearied with his unsuccessful attempts, he passed into a dark, narrow alley, where, finding that he still attracted observation, though on a lesser scale, he dismounted, and, flinging the reins of his horse to his retainer, threaded on foot the many throughfares leading from that spot to the Palace of Orange, which seemed to be, as it had been that of so many on that day, the bourn of his journey.

Here, too, a degree of noisy bustle prevailed, very much at variance with its usually solemn, even pompous regularity. The court exhibited not only its customary crowd of retainers of every sort, but strange faces

and strange liveries seemed to make themselves at home within its precincts. Arkel, for it was he, missed, also, that degree of attention which was usually bestowed upon visitors, and wondered how he was thus permitted to circulate, unquestioned, through the deserted corridors of the building. He had penetrated so far as to ascend a private staircase which, he well knew, would lead to the apartments generally assigned to Count Louis, without encountering the least interruption.

"The measure works more powerfully than I had expected," thought the youth.

As he passed along the gallery at the head of the stairs, a page, apparently loitering about the anterooms for his own pleasure, met his eye: he wore the rich livery of Nassau. Arkel, therefore, made up to him, and inquired for the count. The boy assured him that he was not in his apartments—where he was he could not tell—he would go and inquire. After the lapse of a few minutes he returned with the intelligence that his master was in the armory, alone, and disengaged. Thither Arkel accordingly proceeded; he was, however, surprised and not a little abashed when, instead of his friend and leader in the career of plotting, which he had so warmly though secretly embraced, he saw there—alone, indeed, and disengaged—not the younger, but the elder brother.

Although the person of William of Orange, commonly called "*The Silent,*" was not striking by its proportions, nor his countenance by any remarkable combination of feature, it was impossible to gaze on him and not feel that one stood in no ordinary presence. The beholder might, at first, have been embarrassed to discover the true source of this impression; but a closer acquaintance would have enabled him to trace it to that superiority of mind and intellect which lighted up his deep-set eye, and pale, thoughtful countenance, to whose power even those yielded who were scarcely conscious of its existence. His manners, partaking of the lofty grace that distinguished the great of that period, were tinged, besides, with a gravity almost amounting to an habitual melancholy. He deserved fully the epithet of "*Silent,*" which he had early in life acquired; though not in the vulgar acceptation of the word, for he spoke well and willingly; but never did his words betray more of his thoughts than he exactly meant to convey to the ears of his listeners. Whilst all affectation of prudence was carefully avoided, the virtue itself was never under the control of a wiser head. Distrustful and watchful in the hour of prosperity, but fertile in expedient, and never discouraged in adversity; bold and even daring in the hour of need; ever on his guard against fortune and man; patient, persevering—far-seeing, these were qualities he possessed in no ordinary degree, which, when united, may be justly termed "the genius" of statesmen and rulers. William of Nassau was organised to be a chief and a leader, and owed less to adventitious circumstances than most great men whom history has recorded in her pages.

Arkel, on perceiving his mistake, hastily apologised for his abrupt intrusion; and explaining that his visit had been intended for Count Louis, to whom he wished to communicate matters of importance, he would have retired, but the prince's courtesy induced him to remain.

"You see me here," said he, "loitering away an idle hour. I am overlooking the embellishing of a gun which I intend to give my brother Louis. A young man like you must love to look on such things. I will profit by your opinion."

At the prince's command, an aged armourer brought forward a half-finished matchlock. It was clumsy in form, bell-mouthed, short and thick in the barrel, and heavy in the shoulder-piece; but much less cumbersome than the celebrated muskets with rests, introduced into the Netherlands at a later period by the Duke of Alba, which so charmed Brantôme. The stock was carefully inlaid with ivory and black horn, after a most finished and complicated design. In the centre of the ornamental work was a small shield, containing the arms of Nassau, accurately wrought in the same materials. The old man, gratified by the attentive examination which Arkel bestowed upon his handicraft, produced more samples, and, among others, a breastplate and gauntlets inlaid with gold, of matchless beauty.

"Have you, indeed, unassisted, achieved this work?" inquired Arkel.

"Conrad," said the prince, with a smile, "suffers no one to share his triumphs, nor even to learn his art. He is possessed, as you see, of great skill. He has inherited a few valuable secrets from his father, who, in his turn, had them from his, and so forth. Tradition says that one of his ancestors accompanied one of mine to the Crusades, where he learnt the art of damaskening of the Saracens, by whom both were, for many years, kept prisoners; for Conrad's fathers have ever been as true to mine, as he is to me."

The room in which they stood was hung all around with various suits of armour belonging to every country and to every epoch. The collection formed a perfect history of its progress through succeeding centuries, from the chain-mail used in the first tournaments, down to the more costly, though less cumbersome, harness then in use. Weapons of offence were classed with the same attention to order. Many of these were enriched with precious stones, gold, and silver, and the value of the whole was beyond estimation. Although of more modern invention, many small brass cannons, specimens of the gradual improvement these engines had of late years undergone, were ranged alongside the wall. Distributed about the room were also models of entire towns, with their lace-like towers, streets, and fosses—of fortifications and plans of castles and gardens, most accurately and delicately carved in wood.

Arkel's attention soon became rivetted by a few remarkable specimens of armour which, the prince observed, belonged to his son Philip. They had made part of the collection of the late Count of Büren, and had been placed in their present position in order to make more complete the effect of the collection, by filling up certain interstices in the epochs.

"It is natural," continued he, "that a young man like you should feel much pleasure in such objects. I beg, whenever you feel inclined, you will pay this room a visit; it is an agreeable way of passing a leisure hour."

Then abruptly changing the subject, he demanded of his visitor if he had not of late been to Antwerp; and, without allowing the surprised youth time to reply, inquired if it were not to him that Count Louis had intrusted a small commission for himself.

This small commission was to the amount of many thousand florins.

Arkel was not altogether pleased that Count Louis had thus divulged the secret of his movements to the prince; but a second thought convinced him that there might exist a more perfect understanding between the brothers than was generally supposed. He could, at all events, gain

nothing by an attempt at evasion; he therefore frankly replied in the affirmative.

"How found you the spirits of the citizens—much chafed, doubtless?"

"I had but little opportunity of judging—my stay there was brief; but I heard as much from a person who must, I think, have been well informed."

"I feared it would be so," said Orange, negligently, as if the words rather escaped his lips than his thoughts. "Your father has many friends there;—in what town, indeed, in these lands, is he without such? Surely, your arrival gave pleasure?"

"My family are altogether ignorant of my visit to that place, and I thought it best, in the present state of affairs, to assume another name for the nonce. It could matter but little, as I saw but two persons besides my host during the short time I spent there."

"You were right; your name might have drawn attention upon you. At this period the public spirit is in such a state of effervescence in the provinces, that one should avoid everything likely to cause a sensation. By-the-by, are you aware that your father has been here some days? You may be ignorant of this, as I see you are just from horseback. Nay, nay, no excuses. But where can Louis and Brederode tarry all this time? I advise you, my young friend, unless what you have to tell my brother be urgent, to postpone your visit and your communication for another moment. His time, at this juncture, can scarcely be called his own."

The prince evidently intended to express that he had extended his courtesy as far as he thought convenient or necessary. But Arkel hesitated; his colour went and came, and his heart beat almost audibly with the contending feelings by which it was agitated. The natural timidity of his age, augmented as it was by being in the presence of one who awed not only his enemies but even his friends, was yet increased by some unpleasant misgivings as to the propriety of the step he was meditating. Fully impressed with the importance of the packet he had in his possession, and being uncertain as to the course it were best to pursue, he had, as we have seen, taken his way to the castle of Purmerend, with the intention of consulting with its lord, who, all circumstances considered, would, perhaps, have been his best guide. The sudden and unexpected departure of that nobleman for Brussels had, however, whilst it disappointed his views, allowed him time for reflection. The opinions of the Count of Egmont were not publicly known. Whilst he was esteemed by every one as the very flower of chivalry, his open, bland manners, affable to all, rather established the idea that he was attached to no party, than they encouraged the hopes of any one in particular. Thus Arkel, after having, during the few days he spent in the castle, debated with himself in what manner he should proceed, had come to the final determination of delivering the packet into the hands of Count Louis or those of Brederode; "For," thought he, "it is my first duty to serve my own party." Now, for the first time, the idea presented itself of submitting his important deposit to the inspection of the Prince of Orange. The temptation was strong; but he still felt that strange reluctance to give up a plan once adopted, which often leads men to persist in a line of conduct even when unforeseen circumstances render it no longer necessary. He replied, therefore, that he had

a most important communication to make to his highness's guests, which made it very desirable that he should be admitted to speech of them as soon as possible.

The prince, more influenced, probably, by an almost mechanical habit, or, we should rather say, by one of the predominant qualities of his nature, than from any particular interest in Arkel, had, during the greater part of their conversation, kept his piercing gaze rivetted on his countenance, and watched its workings closely; and he had ere this come to the conclusion, highly creditable to his knowledge of human nature, that the youth had something on his mind of which it much imported him to disburden himself—something it might interest himself to know. No chance of this nature, however slight, was ever neglected by him. He had found it of untold advantage throughout his busy career to attend to what might seem trifling and unimportant to others; and as the poetical imaginations of some will conjure up a graceful image, or derive a pleasing thought, from objects which, to the duller minds of others, would convey nothing, so the peculiar alchemy of the prince's sharpened intellects would turn trifles into positive advantages to himself and his plans. By no means startled, therefore, by Arkel's insistance, he said, calmly,

"And cannot your communication be intrusted to a third party, my young friend? I should, perhaps, be as wise an adviser as my brother—or even," added he, with a smile, "as Brederode himself."

Carried away by these words, Arkel joyfully exclaimed,

"If your grace would, indeed, consent to become, not my adviser only, but my guide, in the first difficulty my life has yet known, I should be but too happy."

"Speak," said the prince, encouragingly.

Elated with the idea of importance with which the disclosure he was about to make, and the treasure he thought himself possessed of, were about to invest him, Arkel paused yet a moment ere he proceeded. He should, then, have a secret in common with the master-spirit of the age! Perhaps the papers he was about to deliver might influence, nay change, the very course of his politics. Then, again, they might not be so all-important as he had fancied them, and he might only reap a well-earned censure for having so long retained them in his possession. At all events, he would remit them to the prince, to dispose of them in the manner he should think most advisable, and thus get rid of a responsibility which began to weigh upon his spirits. All care at the conclusion of his rapid reflections vanished from his ingenuous countenance; a smile, betraying the relief of his mind, stole gradually over it; his hand was hastily thrust into his bosom,—when the favourite page of the prince entered the apartment.

So eager was the boy with the message he had to deliver, that he scarcely noticed the presence of Arkel; and thus the latter, both from his proximity to the parties and from the degree of resonance produced by the peculiar form of the armory, distinctly heard his words, though they were spoken in a low tone, or rather what was meant to be such.

"My lord, the Spaniard is without, awaiting your commands. This is the hour appointed."

A slight shade of impatience passed over the prince's brow. He replied in a whisper, that was, nevertheless, distinctly audible,

"The Spaniard may wait. On no account suffer him to depart. You understand? I will see him presently."

The obedient sprite disappeared; and, turning to Arkel, the prince was about to propose adjourning to his cabinet, where they would be safer from interruption, when again the door opened, and another page appeared, and announced the near approach of the Counts of Egmont, Mansfeldt, Horn, and others of equal distinction, who were making towards the armory, under the impression that the Counts of Nassau and Brederode were there. When, in answer to his hasty inquiries, he heard that his brother was yet from home, the prince determined on receiving these distinguished visitors himself, and gave orders accordingly; although Arkel fancied he could trace upon his features an expression of disappointment. He might have said something more—would probably have fixed a more convenient day or hour for their interrupted conversation to be resumed, but he was prevented by the entrance of his visitors.

Arkel vanished by one door as the noblemen came in at the other, and he found himself in a passage different from that by which he had approached the armory. He was quite unacquainted with this part of the building, and was fearful lest, by threading unknown corridors, he might intrude upon some of the more private apartments; nor did the very sparing light that found its way through the few small and irregular apertures, which served rather to let in air than the rays of the sun, tend to diminish his embarrassment. As his eye, however, grew more familiar with the demi-obscurity, he perceived at the upper end of the passage two figures, who had evidently been made aware of his coming by the sound of the closing door. The light from one of the loopholes near which he stood fell full upon one whose gay colours and diminutive size showed him to be the page who had first interrupted his interview with the prince; the other, whose face was muffled in his short cloak, must be the Spaniard whom he had announced.

Involuntarily to that word Arkel associated the idea of Chievosa. Whether, however, this was suggested by the mere word which, twice repeated, struck upon his ear, or by the stranger's appearance, he could not determine; but every additional glance, as he remained for a few minutes uncertain how to proceed, convinced him more forcibly of the identity which at first he imagined conjured up merely by the power of his own fancy.

His curiosity at length got the better of his desire to avoid recognition, and, advancing to the page, he requested to be conducted to the apartments of Count Louis.

The page hesitated for a moment, then consulted with his companion in a whisper. The attentive Arkel could not catch the muttered reply, nor even the faintest sound of the voice, whose peculiar sweetness would, he conceived, have betrayed at once the individuality he sought to ascertain. The youth appeared satisfied; and saying aloud, "It is well, I shall be back instantly," he prepared to do Arkel's bidding.

His young conductor was well known to Arkel, his brother having filled the same office in his own family for many years. They were sons of a nobleman whose large estates, like those of his own father, lay north of Gueldres, who was considered very fortunate in having secured to his children such *noble et bonne nourriture*, as the training of youths of high descent was then termed. As they traversed the turnings and

windings leading to the more public part of the building, therefore, Arkel, willing to confirm himself in his opinion, ventured, on the strength of old acquaintance, to inquire the name of the person whom they had left behind.

The boy started at this abrupt question; and Arkel, seeing his confusion, maliciously repeated his inquiry, rather with the view of further disconcerting his companion than from an impertinent desire of penetrating into the prince's privacy. The page, however, recovered his composure, and answered firmly, "Who comes here or goes hence are things which concern the prince, and him alone. You can have no interest in asking."

Arkel felt the rebuke, but replied, laughing,

"Come, Master Page, that was well parried, but I am not satisfied. I happen to know both the Spaniard and his name—perhaps part of his errand too. Come, here's a guess. What do you say to Lopez Chievosa?"

The boy remained silent.

"Have you lost your tongue, Sir Page?" said Arkel, haughtily, "that you answer me not."

"Why do you ask questions which I ought not to answer?" said the page, raising his large blue eyes with candour to the face of his interrogator. "Would you have me betray my trust, or tell a falsehood? I will do neither."

"Well," exclaimed Arkel, covering with a gay laugh the confusion he really felt, "I will never, henceforth, allow the vulgar proverb, 'Liar like a page,' to be uttered in my presence; for I have, at last, found one who proves its falsehood. That is right, my lad; persevere thus," continued he, with a patronising nod; "I am glad to have tried your mettle."

The arch expression in the page's countenance showed that he was not quite the dupe of the turn which Arkel had given to the matter, but, impatient to rejoin the person he had left in the gallery, he hurried away without reply. He had scarcely departed, when the door of an anteroom opened, and Count Brederode, refreshed by an elegant morning toilette, made his appearance. He looked surprised, and not exactly pleased, when his eye fell upon Arkel."

"Why so late, Lamoral? We expected you long ago at Breda; we even waited for you. This is not the fitting hour or place for informing us of the result of your visit to Antwerp."

"I was delayed by an unexpected circumstance, and was very much disappointed, upon my arrival at Bois le Duc, to find that you and even John Marnix had flown. I awaited at Purmerend the news of your arrival here, and am now come to join you."

"It is most unlucky that we did not meet as we agreed; but now, my young friend, that we have done so, it must be my first request that you leave us in all haste. Your best method of serving the cause is by instantly withdrawing yourself from Brussels, where, if you stay, it will be next to impossible not to betray your connexion with us. Nay, that is an essential point, Lamoral, and one which you must concede. We are not yet secure enough of your father's good-will to risk his discovering you to be one of us. We might, perhaps, lose you, as we are about to lose one of our most valuable members who, in obedience to his father's persuasions and commands, will no longer be seen among us. You would

not, could not disobey yours; nor would I, myself a father, countenance such a step. We might, by a premature discovery, not only risk your loss, but even our hopes of eventually bringing your noble father to act in concert with us. You see, Lamoral, I am in a great hurry. Count Louis and I scarcely had time to change our riding costume for a more beseeming one, when we were informed of the arrival of many friends. We cannot make them tarry; I cannot just now argue the point with you, but I entreat you to grant me my pleasure in this."

"But, my dear count, what I have to communicate may be of such importance as even to outweigh all other considerations. I claim but a quarter of an hour's patience—nay, half that time will suffice."

"I cannot now even allow you the slightest fragment of it, for here comes Count Louis—you know how little he can endure to wait—so really, my young friend, if you have aught to say so very material to our interests, I beg you will write it, or bide your chance of finding us less engaged; now we cannot attend to you, or rather, I should say, to any secret conference. Believe me, Lamoral, the most important thing at present is, that you go hence as soon as possible. You ask whither? Why, anywhere, my dear boy, to get out of the way. To Antwerp, if you will; in a few days I shall be there myself, and ready to give you as much of my time as you may please to command. Above all, do not dream of appearing at the banquet which Cuyllemberg is to give in our honour. But see, Count Louis is impatient. Adieu! adieu!"

Vain were the hesitating words of Arkel; they were lost in the distance as the two confederates, having hurriedly though kindly greeted him, took their way in all haste towards the armory.

"Fate herself seems to have set her will against it," thought the young man; "and now I remember me, if there be any truth in astrology, to-day is one on which it is unlucky to reveal secrets. The difficulty I find in getting rid of mine is like a warning. Such secret hints of nature ought never to be repulsed when understood. I'll even follow Brederode's advice. I'll meet him at Antwerp; but I will attend the dinner of Count Cuyllemberg in spite of him. A few days cannot make much difference, and I shall have still more leisure during that time to reflect upon this affair. As no one seems at liberty to consult with me, or even to listen to what I have to say, I shall have but the more time to consult with myself, and listen to the voice of my own presentiments. At all events, the packet is safe for the moment. No one guesses in whose possession it now is, and I am yet free to deliver it to whom it may best suit me. How easy it were, after all, and how proper, to give it to my father—but he, too, is engaged."

So saying, or rather thinking, Arkel left the palace, and sought, through the thronged city, the dark alley in which his follower awaited him.

Chapter XVIII.

Night gradually stole upon the city of Brussels, and with the help of the patrol, sent the inhabitants to their homes if not to their beds. It overtook the traveller by land and by sea, and caused the world to seek its temporary repose. Sleep sank, with its golden dreams, on the eyes of the young and the innocent; with here and there, perchance, an exception, where the brighter visions of some untried heart in its spring, kept some fair lid

from drooping. But many, very many, on that calm night counted the weary hours as they chimed from a neighbouring church, whilst the restlessness of fever, pain, or the pang of remorse, banished the slumbers they vainly courted.

How many are watchers, and how different the motives that make them such! Those who love and meet by stealth, whose smiles are shrouded by the same veil that may soon, perchance, conceal their tears—the happy mother whose ear is greeted by her infant's first cry—the bereaved and the departing—the laborious student and the giddy reveller—the admiring astronomer who gazes with ecstasy on the starry skies, and the nun who kneels before the marble of her altar, and looks up with hope to the gloomy vault of her chapel; all these find life as busy and as fraught with care in the light of the moon as in that of day.

Amongst the unquiet spirits of the night none was more active than that of William of Orange. As the hour of one struck from the church near the Palais de la Cour, he left his room, and preceded by his trusty page, bearing a silver flambeau, moved swiftly, though with a noiseless step, towards another part of the building. Perchance the light that gleamed from one solitary window of the government palace, was that by which Margaret of Parma was devising some new spell to lay that most dreaded of spirits at rest for ever.

In a small circular room leading from the banquet-chamber sat three gentlemen, conversing round a table. A couple of large, yellow wax-tapers shed a calm, steady light upon their countenances, whilst a cheerful fire, blazing in the chimney, cast upon them occasionally a warmer glow, revealing their varied expressions to the Prince of Orange, as he glided in and took his seat amongst them, his keen eye resting alternately on the open brow and cheerful smile of Egmont, on the calm, collected aspect of Mansfeldt, and on the arch, bold features of De Horn.

"We cannot, we ought not as Flemings, to submit to such tyranny any longer!" the latter was vehemently exclaiming. "It is in vain that you tell me I say this too bluntly and too openly: it is only by opposing an enemy boldly that there is a chance of conquest. Liberty must wrestle with her oppressor if she would not be crushed—she must struggle, and that fiercely, if tyranny is not to rivet her chains for ever!"

The prince looked pleased, but Egmont's full, manly voice was raised in opposition:

"I, too, am a Fleming, and see with a bleeding heart our privileges destroyed, and our country in danger of becoming, not only a province of, but a prey to Spain; and, were we free, I should be the first to propose myself as your leader in any perilous adventure that could tend to avert so great an evil. But indissoluble ties bind us to Philip. We owe him allegiance, for he is our sovereign—gratitude, for most of us have received personal favours of no mean kind at his hands and those of his father; and most of all are we bound to him in reverence and love, as members of the noble order of which he is the head. Shall we, with the emblem of innocence and faith resting on our bosoms, sully the heart within? Shall knights and nobles fling their vows to the air, as though they were obscure hinds whom fetters alone can bind? No!" continued he, with increasing vehemence, "even death cannot absolve the traitor from deserved ignominy. The old laws of our forefathers are not yet

forgotten. The lists may be closed against the son of the rebel—his arms reversed—his honours may become extinct, and the shame of his deed rest upon his line."

"And his estates confiscated," added Mansfeldt, with a sigh; "his children outcasts from the land of their birth. Yes! the sufferings that rebellion may entail, even when dared in the fairest cause, are so great as to outweigh any advantages that could ever result from it. I would not plant a flower that could only bloom in blood and ashes."

"Had Brutus thought thus, Rome had never been free," said De Horn, moodily.

"For my part," said the Prince of Orange, "I agree in some measure with Count Egmont. The crimson ribbon around our throats binds the hand, although it cannot enchain the mind."

"Then throw from you," exclaimed De Horn, impatiently, "the contemptible trinket; for what else can that be called which enslaves a man's actions?"

"The word of a knight alone should bind him for ever," observed Egmont; "how much more his oath! And this very badge which you despise, is an honour conferred by the King of Spain."

"Then let us send it back to Spain. The emblem that Philip wears, or gives, should be a wolf, and not a lamb," said De Horn, vehemently flinging on the table the small golden ornament of the Fleece, that hung around his neck by a crimson scarf. "There!—do like me—throw away with this band all the scruples that the wearing of it lays upon your hearts, and, like mine, suffer yours to beat henceforth but for your country!"

"It were unwise, to say the least," observed Mansfeldt, "to deprive ourselves of so powerful a shield as the Golden Fleece may prove."

"And who would renounce willingly the honour of belonging to the most noble Order existing?" said Egmont. "Who would not value that emblem which suffers none other to stand near its greatness?"

"Yes," said De Horn, with a bitter smile; "Faith, it would seem, can suffer no other virtue to thrive beside her. No one, at least, will say that Mercy or Justice go hand-in-hand with her just now. But you, Mansfeldt, care not if these be wanting."

"You do our friend injustice," said the prince: "he expressed himself in the council as generously as any of us against the Inquisition. Prudence is wisdom, and shows not lack of feeling."

"Thank you for judging me rightly," said Mansfeldt, reddening as he spoke.

"I do not mean to deny," continued the prince, "that the impulses of De Horn meet, in some degree, with my sympathy. But, perhaps, our vows are not so binding as we imagine. Perhaps, again, the Fleece has not more power to protect than could have the lamb of which it is the emblem. Perchance, too, if several of us were to send back to the king this greatest mark of his favour, it might give him a timely and salutary warning. It may be wholesome to let him know that others can dare as well as he."

"I think you will scarcely find aught to justify such a measure in the tenets of the Order," said Mansfeldt.

"We had better read and examine," exclaimed De Horn. "It will go hard if I cannot convince you."

"You would persuade us to our ruin, if we were willing," observed Mansfeldt.

"There may stand nothing against our renouncing the Order, if we chose no longer to remain its members," said Orange. "This deserves consideration."

After some further debate, it was agreed to refer to the book in which were transcribed the laws and principles founded by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, upon his institution of the Order, in honour of his alliance with Isabel of Portugal; and to which were appended the new regulations that had been introduced by successive monarchs. Each knight, on his investiture, received a copy of this document, which, at his death, together with the collar of the Order, his heirs were bound to restore to the king, who, in turn, transmitted them to him who was elected in lieu of the deceased; for the number of the members admissible was limited, and the death or the disgrace of a knight alone made room for another. Francis Verdugo, one of the gentlemen of Count Mansfeldt, was sent by the prince to bring from its retreat this treasured volume. He soon returned, bearing a box of gold exquisitely wrought, through the interstices of which a crimson velvet lining was visible. The prince unclosed it with a small golden key, and removing the satin envelope, produced the small vellum deposit.

"Here, Verdugo," said he, "seek out the rules, and read them in a clear, audible voice."

The person thus addressed took the volume respectfully from the prince's hand, and ran his eye rapidly over a few of the pages, as he suffered them to escape through his fingers. The caligraphy was beautiful; it was no where illumined, and its extreme simplicity harmonised but little with the pomps of which it spoke.

"'We, Philip, by the grace of God Duke of Burgundy,'" began Verdugo, in a monotonous tone of voice.

"Pass that," said the prince.

The reader, having turned a few more pages, continued:—

"'*First day.*—The knights shall be habited in long, flowing, crimson-velvet robes, trimmed with flints, sparks, and fleeces, lined with minever, and escaloped hoods of the same. This day shall they go to Mass, and each deposit a gold piece with the treasurer of the Order, return to the palace of the king, and dine with him as brothers.'"

Verdugo again suffered his eye to run over some lines:—

"'*Second day.*—They shall issue from the palace of the sovereign covered with long, black mantles, with black hoods and *cornettes*. They shall thus proceed in solemn array to the church, and attend the Service for the Dead.

"'*Third day.*—Their robes shall be of snow-white damask, with hoods, and wreath of crimson velvet'—hem—hem—'attend Mass, and each offer a wax taper, bearing his arms, to the shrine for the dead. The king sits as head of the——'"

"Spare us that!" exclaimed De Horn, impatiently. "We've all gone through the mummery."

"There can exist no grandeur, or rather no impression of it can be conveyed to the mind, but through the medium of pomp and solemnity," observed the prince.

"But grandeur and greatness are not always synonymous. Can you turn to nothing more important—more to the point, Verdugo?"

"No," answered the reader, again turning over the leaves, and seeking, though apparently in vain, something relative to the subject under discussion. His eye glanced over pages full of the costume of the Order, and its gradual improvements or changes; the number of knights admissible; the ceremony of election and of reception; the manner of holding the chapters: but nothing of consequence could he see.

"Give me the book," said the prince, with some severity of manner. "I shall probably be able to find what we want. Ha! here it is:—'The knights are all brothers, and shall be bound in love and unity as such, nor shall they shrink from each other.' Here, again—'The duke, or king, shall not determine upon war or peace, nor upon any great innovation or change whatsoever, without assembling the knights to inform them of his will, and demand their opinions and votes; nor shall he decide on aught without their consent.'"

The prince read in a clear, steady voice; not a word but had its full value.

"Methinks," continued he, "the king has set us the example of perjury. He has forgotten to consult, or even to trust, his knightly counsellors on so many points, that they, who cannot eject him from among them, might withdraw from a bond which he has been the first to break."

"For myself," said De Horn, "I have no scruples whatever on that head. The Venetians boast that they were Venetians before they were Christians. Surely, we ought not to forget that we were Flemings before we were knights, and that our country once knew freedom."

"Will your grace allow me the book for one moment," said Mansfeldt, "and for one moment only. There," rapidly glancing over the pages, "I have it;" and rising, he read in a high, impressive voice—

"'The knight who shall be found traitor to his king, and acting against his allegiance, shall be accused, tried, and condemned for perjury, deprived of the noble insignias of the Order, and given over to the laws of his country to be punished according to his deserts.'" Mansfeldt closed the book, and continued:—"Gentlemen, I need not remind you how the act you meditate will be viewed by the sovereign whom it is meant to insult. Are you willing to submit to his displeasure, or able to cope with it? Neither, I should hope and imagine. Provoke not a struggle which can but end in mischief to yourselves. As a friend and brother do I warn you. Be persuaded by my voice; if you will not, then let me withdraw from amongst you. But be not rash, I entreat you. Draw not the wrath of the sovereign upon you by a measure which will diminish, nay, even destroy, all your power over your countrymen; which will, I make bold to say, break the chain that yet binds together the nobles of this land. De Horn be advised. Pause, Prince of Orange, and think of this."

"You are right," said the prince, calmly; "take up your chain again, De Horn, *it is not yet time!* as the king says, when he revolves in his mind the cheapest and safest way of taking the life of a Nassau. It is not yet his; though he may, peradventure, take it one day. It is not yet time to act, but," continued he, rising from his seat, "it is fully that to seek our pillows."

"What noise is that?" exclaimed De Horn, changing colour, and fixing his eye sternly upon the arras. "Surely no spy could find his way here, and at this hour!"

The look of Orange lighted upon Verdugo's countenance, just as a faint smile was fading from his contemptuous lip. The expression did not escape him.

"I would not vouch for that," said he, fixing the eye of that gentleman until it quailed before his steady gaze; then, glancing at his master —"We are taught to believe that kings are the representatives of the Highest. His eye and ear are everywhere; and to supply their deficiency in this respect, do princes oftentimes see and hear with the faculties of others, and thus may be said to be omnipresent. Never was bar or bolt so strong, or the hour so dark, but these organs of royalty will defy the one, and set at nought the other; nor is there a veil so deep but their senses will penetrate its folds. Again that sound!—a rustle behind the arras. By Heaven! gentlemen, we will seize the traitor!"

With his eyes still fixed on Verdugo, whose sallow complexion gave way to a deathlike pallor, the prince rose and made towards the door; whilst Egmont and De Horn precipitated themselves, with drawn swords, against the tapestry. The fiery noblemen had already made a couple of rents in the loom, before they would admit the truth that the only resistance they encountered was the wall behind the arras, and that nought but air intervened. They then became aware, for the first time, that Mansfeldt had followed the prince into the passage beyond. They came up with them, but the light from the flambeau, which Orange had hastily snatched, was too feeble to penetrate the obscurity beyond the immediate spot where they stood grouped together.

"The search is now vain," said the prince, turning towards them a look as calm as if nothing had occurred to ruffle it. "Count Mansfeldt and I arrived in time to see a dark form glide swiftly along the passage, but so cautiously keeping out of the rays of the light as to render detection impossible. It darted boldly across towards a private staircase, through which it is next to impossible that he should not have escaped. Especially as I doubt not the traitor, whoever he may be, is possessed of private keys, as well as an accurate knowledge of my house."

"But surely he could not vanish through the wall," exclaimed Egmont.

"No; but through the door that the arras conceals most easily. Raise the tapestry, and you will, doubtless, find he has left it open in his hurry to escape. What makes this more extraordinary is, that I fancied myself the sole possessor of the key to that long since condemned entrance. Said I not well, my friends, that priests are right in terming kings God's representatives on this earth? For their eyes and their ears are indeed everywhere."

"They would be both blind and deaf to all things were it not for their spies," said De Horn.

"They are not, perhaps, the only men who resort to such means," said Mansfeldt, emphatically, at the same time turning his clear, blue eye full on William of Nassau.

"Well," observed De Horn, impetuously, "it is better to pay a spy than to be one."

The colour mounted to the count's very brow, and tinged his temples with crimson.

"I do not know to whom or what your allusions tend, De Horn, nor do I seek to understand them. At my years the blood grows cooler, and the reason, it may be, becomes all the freer. I repeat, I wish to understand you in nothing; but I will again state my own opinions on the discussions of this night so clearly as to avoid, if possible, all misunderstanding on your part, or that of any one here present."

"Before or behind the arras?" insisted De Horn, with a sarcastic smile.

"We need dread no further interruption," said the prince; "my trusty page keeps watch without."

But the reply of Orange did not prevent Mansfeldt from coolly proceeding in the same tone in which he had commenced:

"Nay, my friends, it is not from the fear of having this night's conference made known that I beg, once more, to withdraw from all future meetings of a similar tendency; but because I am convinced they will end in betraying those who figure in them into actions which my principles disavow—my prudence forbids. You, Count De Horn, should be too knightly, and you, Prince of Orange, too wise, not to see that what you meditated but now must compromise both honour and safety; I, at least, will countenance so overt an act of contempt towards our sovereign neither by my words nor my presence."

"I am with you, Mansfeldt," exclaimed Egmont, pressing the golden emblem of innocence to his bosom; "for I will never give up this badge of honour but when summoned by my God or my king."

"You are perfectly right, my friends," said the prince; "consult your consciences, and," added he, with a peculiarly expressive smile, "the dictates of prudence. De Horn's proposal did not entirely meet with my approbation from the first."

"I do not care," exclaimed De Horn, angrily, "who disapproves of it? I am proud of daring to proclaim my sentiments openly."

"Tush, De Horn," said Egmont, soothingly, for he saw his friend had arrived at a pitch of excitement at which he might easily forget himself beyond recal, and make a quarrel at a most untimely moment. "Tush! Speak not of openness to us who have met by stealth and by night, that its veil might the better conceal the mystery of our assembling. It is personal to us all. Come, it were wisest to give up arguing, since we are of such decided opinions that nothing can alter them. Let us all part friends as we met, and forget everything except that we are still brothers of the Order, therefore bound to love and *trust* each other; and let us keep our counsel to ourselves."

The cheerful courtesy of Egmont acted like a charm upon the others; and the midnight conclave was dissolved with, at least, every appearance of cordiality; though, perhaps, at the heart of each, with the exception of Count Egmont, whose noble, unsuspicious nature was confident in everything, there rose a doubt—a suspicion of all else beside himself—of the proceedings of that night especially, most unfavourable to the tardy repose which they at length courted.

PROFESSIONAL MEN.

By E. P. Rowsell, Esq.

NO. I.—THE BARRISTER.

The profession of a barrister finds much favour in our eyes. From the heavy expenses attendant upon its adoption, it may not, indeed, be entered upon by any not tolerably well circumstanced; but, on the other hand, it is a profession which will assuredly prove to the clever and painstaking man, who has embraced it, richly fruitful in honour and advantage. Here, at all events, merit may look down upon unworthiness; here, the intellectually-gifted man may survey with complacency any puny-minded but aristocratic rival, competing with him for distinction and emolument. Such antagonist will not succeed here; his wealthy and noble friends may procure for him a living in the church; and inasmuch as he may give over the main labour involved by such living to a couple of curates, to be had upon—oh! such cheap terms, his deficiencies, if not unnoticed, will not interfere with his holding his trust, and his receiving the pecuniary benefit attaching thereto. Or there may be obtained for him a snug government appointment (though these snug government appointments are getting very rare now-a-days), and as he will probably be able to sign a receipt for his salary (he unfortunately cannot be relieved of that trouble; that *cannot* be done by deputy), he may with great comfort retain such appointment unto his life's end. But all the influential and titled supporters in the world cannot make a small-brained and incapable man a prosperous barrister. At the bar, men of ability and legal lore, *only*, can by any chance achieve success. Solicitors dare not give a brief to the Honourable Mr. Augustus Timtoddy, merely on account of the "Honourable." If the Honourable Mr. Timtoddy were connected with the highest family and the most influential and richest personages in the realm, and were inferior in ability to Mr. Jones, the youngest son of John Jones, fishmonger, the latter would be the man who, before the Honourable Augustus, would receive a brief. And we say this circumstance makes us look upon the profession of a barrister with peculiar favour. We contemplate with delight the long list of men who arrived at eminence at the bar, and in many cases attained the bench, who owed their advancement purely to their talents and their industry. It is so at the bar, that the gifted and intelligent *must* win their way. A physician may be a very clever man, but by very slow degrees is his cleverness exhibited, and tardy, therefore, is his progress to renown. The clergyman may be a very learned man and effective preacher, but it will only be by slow degrees likewise that he will arise at a lofty and dignified position. But it can hardly be that the barrister shall be a sound lawyer and a good speaker, and shall not speedily obtain both wealth and distinction. A barrister's talent is not hid like the talent exerted in many other occupations. When a clever counsel

makes a speech, the judge hears it, his fellow-barristers hear it, and (what is vastly more important still) the solicitors in court hear it; and if the speech be undeniably good, and the manifestation of superior ability be unmistakeable, it is a matter of policy to retain this barrister, whoever he may be, aristocrat or plebeian, rich or poor, in future cases, that he may work for other clients the same good result that in all probability his cleverness will achieve for his present. The clergyman who preaches an eloquent discourse, pleases and moves his hearers, but the sensation excited is small compared with that created in a court of law among solicitors, through the delivery by a rising barrister of an effective and powerful speech. Henceforth let not the young man be afraid. He may be mightily independent; he need not seek, for he will be most abundantly sought; the road to fame and fortune lies open before him, and while men equally clever in their professions as doctors or clergymen, will be making, perchance, little way, he—the barrister—may spring forward in an incredibly short space of time to high honour and great affluence.

But while we thus contend for the arena offered by the bar as being admirably adapted for the ambitious man who has talents qualifying him for such a field of action, it is fair we should notice one or two things that may be urged against the profession. In the first place, don't let any gentle youth who has to choose a profession, venture to select that of a barrister, albeit his talents may point that way (if he have no particular ability he will earn more money by sweeping crossings), unless he is prepared to work like a drayhorse. Thriving barristers *do* work like drayhorses. The wear and tear of having to peruse half-a-dozen briefs almost at one time, containing each of them a mass of matter enough to make one's head whirl round—the giving such consideration to each case as is absolutely essential to the understanding the main features—the consultations, crowding one upon another—the arguing, explaining, enforcing each cause, any false move being of vital consequence and damning a man's reputation—notwithstanding the immense number of demands upon his thought and consideration thundered at him from all quarters, render it almost impossible to rivet the attention upon one point even for a few minutes; we say, all these circumstances combined, do most certainly constitute the life of a successful barrister one of most awful labour; and, though his gains may be great—oh, he earns them—earns them to the very last penny.

There is another objection that should be noticed, upon quite a different score. The indiscriminate advocacy of right and wrong—the often so stating a case that counsel appear to be endeavouring to persuade others to an opinion they do not themselves hold—the helping to gain a cause, concerning which there may be a clear conviction in the mind that it is a bad and unjust one; this is unquestionably a nauseous necessity to which the barrister has often to submit. The case is not, however, so bad as some would have it. Lord Brougham's dictum that counsel is called upon to do *anything* for his client; that he is to throw aside every consideration save that of advantaging such client, is utterly, inexpressibly monstrous. There is no such a call upon a counsel; if there were, it would be disgraceful to be a barrister. No; the counsel is bound to do for his client just what that client, if he had the requisite legal knowledge and

ability, might be expected to do for himself, yet without overstepping the bounds of right and fairness. It were, in truth, degrading the profession to a most awful depth to make it compulsory on the "hireling advocate," as the barrister is sometimes politely termed, so to identify himself with his client that he should undertake to do anything, or say anything, for that client that could be regarded as antagonistic to principles of honour and morality. Every fair and legitimate advantage that the advocate can grasp he is bound to seize; he is paid for doing this, and in doing it, he only renders an equivalent for the fee he has received; but that a counsel is called upon to do any mean or dirty action, to have recourse to any trickery or questionable proceeding, merely because his so doing might prove beneficial to the cause of his client, is an untrue assertion calculated infinitely to injure the character of the profession, and to draw down upon it the suspicions and dislike of all upright and honourable men.

Still, as we have said, counsel must indiscriminately advocate, to a certain extent, both right and wrong. They must occasionally—in appearance at all events—back up injustice and fight against equity. And this necessity must ever be, to a sensitive individual, a very disagreeable one. However, if the counsel only bear in mind how far he is required to go in his advocacy of a cause, of the unsoundness of which he may entertain little or no doubt, the difficulties started by conscience will quickly disappear. He is to do all that fairly can be done, he is to say all that fairly can be said, no more; if he go beyond, if he have regard only to winning the day, if he seek to conquer by all methods, no matter how questionable or how opposed to right and equity, then, we say, the barrister lowers himself to a degree saddening to contemplate, and which tends to throw lasting discredit upon a profession which really and truly is a lofty and a noble one.

Ay, a lofty and a noble one; for if he act so that even when supporting wrong, he render no offence to the inward monitor—when by good fortune, he shall be called upon to combat for the right—the counsel may feel a glow within him at the thought of how legitimately he may now employ all his energy, all his power, all his skill, to win a victory. We can envy a barrister into whose hands a good and just cause is entrusted. We can envy the gratification with which he must prepare for the struggle—the heat with which he will strive for success—and the satisfaction with which he may hereafter contemplate the fact that in having won this victory there is a deeper cause for rejoicing than would exist in the mere circumstance of his having added to his list of triumphs. It is a glorious duty the having to advocate the cause of the widow and the fatherless—the desolate and oppressed. It is something to step between the persecutor and the persecuted—and to do battle with a giant's power in a righteous suit. It is something for the eloquent advocate to be called upon to do his best for the weak against the mighty, and to employ his noble talents and lofty energies to bring victory to the right, and cast confusion on the wrong. So that there may be many a bright labour upon which the barrister may look back in after years, and many a thought may recur of most joyful and blessed exercise of abilities and powers. And people may talk of the "hireling advocate," and sneer and say the fervour is bought with money, and that the hope of gain alone excites

the ardour; but we feel sure that where the right is advocated and the wrong denounced, it is a much stronger emotion which animates the vast majority of English barristers,—an earnest and hearty desire to gain a victory, because the victory is for justice and for truth—to inflict a defeat because the opponent is an oppressor and wrong-doer.

The functions of the bench do not give rise to the same excitement and animation engendered by the duties of the bar, but they are of a higher and more exalted order. The occupation of a judge cannot but be regarded by every one with earnest respect and reverence. It stands alone in dignity; an honourable and upright judge is a character than which we cannot conceive a nobler or a loftier. The man who, day by day, brings to bear all the faculties of a superior intellect energetically and perseveringly to the task of applying justice, of detecting falsehood, and of unveiling truth—of raising up the wronged and casting down the evil-doer—who, unmoved by any consideration save that of discovering and establishing the right; and who, nevertheless, when called upon to punish transgressors remembers mercy, only inflicting such penalty as may be necessary to deter others from committing a like offence;—such a man, we say, may well claim, and should ever receive, as much homage as we would pay to any living being. It must be a glorious change from the bar to the bench—from the scene of incessant turmoil and excitement to a position identified with calmness and serenity. For no elaborate displays of eloquence are needed from the judge. Eloquent he may still be, but his eloquence should be of altogether a different order to that in which he delighted at the bar. Fervour there should still be, not fervour to win a cause, but a deep and holy earnestness to exhibit and establish truth. Unmoved by any save righteous motives, unstirred by anything like passion; apart from the conflict, calm, serene, and dignified, the judge should, as it were, simply look down upon the combatants, see the cause of their quarrel, and, without the slightest shadow of bias, plainly set forth that cause divested of all mystification that may have been cast around it; and leave it to the jury to decide the bare question of facts. And a judge who so does his duty, being equally conscientious in his general dealings, may, without quailing, look forward to that coming day, when in a mightier court he himself shall be summoned and his own cause shall be heard.

Upright judges and an enlightened bar, may God ever give us!

JACOB VAN DER NEESS.

A ROMANCE.

By Madame Paalzow.

Chapter XXIII.

Van der Néess, as we have before informed our readers, justly deserved the character of a shrewd, cautious trader. He was quick in discovering the motives and views of those with whom he dealt, and was enabled to give a tolerable exact opinion of the condition and importance of most of the great mercantile houses in Holland, and in the Netherlands, as he had ways and means to spy out even their most secret undertakings; but Van der Néess was a wretched politician; he had caught up some few imperfect notions on the subject of politics; and these he clung to with short-sighted obstinacy, and imagined infallible. It happened that about this period he had contributed a considerable sum towards a Portuguese loan; he received very high interests for this, and deemed it a remarkably judicious measure, especially from its being an underhand proceeding conducted with the strictest secrecy.

But a peace was concluded with Portugal, which suddenly placed this affair in a very dubious light. The payment of the interests ceased altogether, while there was no mention made of the capital, which appeared to be endangered in the financial crisis of that country; and Néess discovered to his infinite alarm, by the manner in which his application was treated, that he had become entangled in an undertaking in which, perhaps, he dared not even confess to have taken part in, and for which, at all events, he could not claim the protection of the States of Holland; for his creditors did not hesitate to ask how, as a burgher of Holland, he could have been induced to supply the foes of that country with money.

As long as this affair continued in regular train, Van der Néess had secretly exulted in his sagacity; he had never troubled himself with any doubts as to its moral admissibility, for he was not given to be scrupulous on that point. Advantage, success, and security, were the only considerations by which he weighed any undertaking.

Van der Néess was perfectly aware that the principal and most respectable capitalists of Amsterdam had refused, with proud disdain, to have anything to do with this affair, of which the managers kept behind the scenes. But he could not appreciate the higher motives by which they were guided, and therefore only congratulated himself on his superior judgment, and entered with malicious exultation into this unsafe and unlawful speculation. Satisfied by the pompous papers that were drawn out, and the ministers' guarantee that he was perfectly safe, he continued for some time to receive the high interests for his capital with infinite delight.

But suddenly the payment ceased. Van der Néess immediately applied to the agents, and the affair appeared at once in its true light. In order to effect the peace, the ministers who had guaranteed this loan were dismissed in disgrace, and all their measures, as far as possible, were thrown upon their own responsibility. Thus the government was wholly exculpated and freed from all obligations regarding what had passed. In

reply to Van der Néess's application, the papers on which he supported his claims were returned to him, without any further consideration; and he was informed that any responsibilities which the former ministers had undertaken, were now to be considered as private transactions, in which the present government could take no interest. Thus it appeared Van der Néess's papers possessed no higher authority than that of the deposed ministers; besides, it was said there was no note of any such loan in the ministerial papers; and thus Mynherr Jacob van der Néess's whole demand was treated as a private affair, for the settlement of which he was referred to the *ci-devant* ministers, who had now become private individuals.

This answer was given with the less hesitation, that the agents were fully conscious of the advantages they had over a burgher capable of supplying the enemies of his country with money during the progress of a war, who, in case he attracted publicity by his complaints, would be considered little better than a traitor to his country. This opinion, as we have hinted before, was pretty clearly expressed in the answer he received, added to a serious warning to keep as quiet as possible in order to avoid attracting attention to his dishonest proceedings, and a compassionate promise to keep his conduct secret from the States of Holland.

Our readers may imagine the effect of this communication upon Van der Néess. The gout seemed suddenly to have left him. He roared and jumped about like a lunatic, unable to form a resolution, and apparently insensible to the pains of the gout. Perhaps this caused them to cease, and reanimated his stiffened limbs, according to the usual process of nature under severe mental agitations.

To his great astonishment, Caas found the bed empty when he came the next morning at the usual hour to dress and lead down his master. The maid was in great alarm, and declared she had never heard anything more terrific than Van der Néess's roaring and howling during the preceding day and night. She stated that he had run about wildly from one coffer to another, and she had heard a great rustling of papers, though she carefully kept out of his way, for he had repeatedly exercised violence against himself, and torn his hair and his clothes; and she would even swear he had jumped on the table, then back to the floor, till everything shook and creaked around him.

He had left the house at dawn of day, without changing his clothes or taking any breakfast; though he had eaten nothing since the morning of the preceding day.

Van der Néess had, too late, learnt the true nature of the transaction in which he was implicated; he now discovered that he was caught in a trap, while, to attempt to escape, was as perilous as to sit still. His lamentable ignorance of political results had led him into this misfortune; but as he would not attribute this blame to his own deficiencies or his insatiable avarice, he vented his rage in curses loud and deep on the ministers, the king, the country, the agents—everything but himself—and at length resolved to repair to Antwerp, where the head agent of the Portuguese minister lived, and make him answerable for his demand.

But he began to suspect something more than mere mercantile calculation was required to conduct affairs of this sort; and though he had always spoken with great contempt of state policy, as a farrago of nonsense, yet he began to think it might be useful to him to know something about it, as he had to deal with those who made it an excuse for

their conduct towards him; and therefore he determined to get some hints on the subject from Cornelius Hooft, who, he thought, must have all that trash at his fingers' end.

To Cornelius Hooft, therefore, Van der Néess repaired, in the frenzied excitement caused by his fears; and his was the first hand that raised the bright knocker of the door, for the sun had just begun to gild the steeples and roofs of the highest houses with its earliest rays.

Cornelius Hooft was a thorough man of the world. After being married three times, he had been left a widower at last, and his only daughter was advantageously settled at the Hague. Since then, Mynherr Cornelius Hooft, who had been raised to the rank of burgomaster, had led the life of an elegant bachelor, surrounded by all the comforts of wealth and refinement. He was nursed and attended by a set of well-schooled domestics, and his house was a model of order and regularity.

The porter, therefore, appeared very indignant at Van der Néess's early summons; and as he did not immediately recognise him, owing to his disordered appearance, refused him admittance, saying that Mynherr Cornelius was engaged at his morning toilette.

A gruff answer from a servant ever had the effect of increasing Van der Néess's rudeness. Thus he would not suffer himself to be repulsed, but became so furious as to outdo even the porter in violence. Owing to the stillness that reigned in the streets at that early hour, the noise of this scuffle resounded all over the house, and at length reached even the luxurious apartment of Mynherr Cornelius, which, draped with green silk hangings, looked into a neat little garden, and was seldom exposed to such interruptions of its peaceful quiet. As Van der Néess in his fury had repeatedly uttered his name, the porter's continued refusals to let him in proceeded rather from the obstinacy natural to servants who have experienced rude treatment, and the wish to procure himself some little satisfaction, by suffering Néess to rage on, than from the fear of disturbing his master, though he did not fail to plead the latter as his excuse, maintaining that such a fellow, as he called him, was not entitled to speak to a burgomaster.

As soon as Cornelius Hooft heard what was going on, the strife, of course, was brought to an end; and Van der Néess darted past the valet, who came to conduct him, and rushed up the polished, carpeted staircase, growling, and shaking himself like a wild animal, till he reached a small parlour adjoining Cornelius's sleeping-room.

A bright fire was blazing in the marble chimney, near which stood a breakfast-table, covered with costly articles of plate and porcelain, and in a rich damask-silk fauteuil sat Mynherr Cornelius, wrapped in a dressing-gown trimmed with fur, and preparing to enjoy the dainties and delicacies of a Dutch breakfast.

Néess burst into the room as if he were pursued, and suddenly stopped before Cornelius. It was impossible to imagine a greater contrast than was offered by these men. The appearance of the one was elegant, gentlemanly, and neat in the extreme; he looked healthy and cheerful, even handsome, for his age. The good-natured expression of his countenance was agreeably enlivened by his bright, expressive eyes; and a slight sarcastic smile played about his lips.

We have attempted to give our readers an idea of Van der Néess's personal appearance and style of dress; but the general effect of all this

was surpassed on the present occasion. It was the first time he had ever incurred any serious loss; one, too, which he was to bear without murmur or complaint. Since the preceding day he had writhed under the influence of the fiercest passions; he had neither eaten, nor slept, nor thought of his attire. Through the violence of his agitation, the power of the gout had been subdued; yet his thoughts were so absorbed by his loss that he never once noticed this. Suffice it to say, Van der Néess's appearance was frightful; and it seemed more natural to imagine him some monster wrapped in men's clothes, than to believe a human being could be thus fearfully disfigured and disguised.

Mynherr Cornelius looked at him with unbounded surprise, for, but two days before, he had left him in his armchair a close prisoner with the gout; and though it was not the first time Van der Néess had recovered from such an attack, there was a fearful wildness in his looks which could not fail to attract attention.

"Really, Van der Néess," cried he, "you are very active for a person suffering from the gout. It seems the attack has passed off more quietly than usual, but it is surprising how soon you get on your legs again."

"Ah, don't talk of that," cried Néess; "it is of no consequence. Misfortunes soon give a man the use of his legs. I believe I was as stiff as a poker even yesterday, but that sort of thing must yield to necessity. I never once thought of my legs; they followed of themselves."

"Now, Néess, have you really experienced a misfortune?—that is to say, a misfortune that deserves to be called so? Good God! I hope Floris is well?"

"Floris, Floris!" cried Néess, much irritated that this should be accounted the greatest misfortune. "Floris must now give up all her follies, and cease to play the fine lady; she must lay aside all the airs of her grand relations, and set to work without the assistance of a maid or an errand-boy."

Van der Néess felt a secret pleasure in tormenting Mynherr Cornelius with fears regarding his darling, for he well knew his own distress would not much affect the burgomaster.

"Compose yourself, Van der Néess," replied Cornelius at length, in a calm voice; "you have suffered some miserable mischance or other to drive you frantic. As long as Floris is well, you will manage to get over the rest. Here's a chair for you; come, sit down, and take a cup of this good Mocha coffee, instead of your porridge, which, I warrant, was not ready at this early hour."

"Indeed!" cried Van der Néess, striking his fist on the mahogany table with such violence that everything shook upon it. "So, whatever may happen to poor Van der Néess is of no consequence, provided it does not touch that dainty doll, Miss Floris. But this time she won't escape. This time she will have to suffer as well as her poor despised father! This time she will have to go begging along with him, and bear the yoke as well as her poor ruined father!"

Cornelius now grew more attentive.

"Van der Néess," said he, seriously, "lay aside this frantic violence, and speak like a sensible man. Have you suffered any heavy losses? Come, now, compose yourself. You will attract general attention by this manner; and there will be no hope of saving you, if you give way to despair, and thus lose your credit."

This had some effect. Van der Néess paused for a moment, and then said, as he produced the ill-fated papers—

"Look here, my lord burgomaster; examine these papers; then, if you also say they are of no value, Van der Néess will be no better than a beggar; and he may begin again where he was forty years ago—turn porter, carry burdens for others, and let out his warehouses for other people's goods."

"You aggravate again, Van der Néess," said Mynherr Cornelius. "Let us see, man, what you have there; a sly old fox like you is not likely to be out in his reckoning."

"Ah! if it were but a matter of common calculation," shrieked Van der Néess, relapsing in his old despair. "But this—ha! this is more in your line, though it is a trick of the devil's devising. It surpasses my powers of calculation. There! read—read, and say whether there is any escape or help for a poor honest man, whom a set of infernal wretches have conspired to rob and ruin, like so many highwaymen and pick-pockets."

But Mynherr Cornelius had no sooner glanced at the contents of the papers, than he pushed away the inviting breakfast-table with some impetuosity; his countenance suddenly changed, the veins on his forehead swelled high, and betrayed his rising passion, while his eyes flashed with indignation.

Without reading to the end, he threw the papers from him, with an air of horror and disgust, and, rushing up to Van der Néess, with a sudden impulse of passion, he cried—

"Is it possible that you are implicated in this dirty, disgraceful transaction, miserable, treacherous usurer that you are? To secure the pitiful interests, which the meanest money-changer in our money-market spurned from him, because it dishonoured him, you have entered into—a speculation for which you deserve the halter! Do you know," cried he, with increasing wrath, "that you have not only acted like a rascal, but like a fool—like a poor, miserable fool? You have suffered yourself to be overreached like a silly schoolboy, and made yourself a laughing-stock for your adversaries!"

"Overreached!" shrieked Van der Néess, wringing his hands; "overreached did you say? But these papers—these great names—these ministers—these securities?"

"Silly, wretched usurer!" cried Mynherr Cornelius, quite beside himself with rage, "you deserve to be kicked out of my house!" He threw the papers furiously on the ground. "Bah! they contaminate the place where they lie. Do you know that, if I choose to betray you, you would be turned out of the merchants' guild, and come under the power of the law, to be branded as a common traitor to your country, and then rewarded with the halter?"

Van der Néess started back a few steps; his knees tottered.

"Turned out of the guild, my lord burgomaster!—and a beggar! And is all this worth nothing?" he shrieked, suddenly, and in mortal agony threw himself on the ground beside his papers.

"Worth so much," cried Mynherr Cornelius, "that you may thank your God if I take these papers with the tongs, and throw them into this fire, in order to efface all evidence of your treacherous guilt! Ha! fellow! why did you come hither to make me your confidant in your villany?

Don't you know that it would be my duty to seize these papers, and deliver them up to the great tribunal of commerce?"

With a savage yell, Van der Néess threw himself upon the scattered papers, and hastily collected them.

He quaked with fear and alarm at the harsh words of Mynherr Cornelius, who was generally so mild and forbearing, without, however, feeling conscious of the shameful part he had acted.

"Oh, noble sir!" cried he, in a cringing tone, "is it possible that all this is as you say? Good God! have mercy upon me!—and yet, what have I done? Is not every measure allowable in trade that is safe and advantageous? How then have I sinned so grossly in making a loan such as great states often make to each other?"

Cornelius suddenly gazed at him—the thought flashed across his mind that perhaps this man was unable to judge of the extent of his crime. The comparison he had made use of sounded like the short-sighted jargon of a common usurer, who considers duty to his country, patriotic virtue, and honour, as mere hollow, high-sounding terms, to which no one attaches any serious importance.

"Van der Néess," said the noble-minded Hooft, at length, in a more composed tone, "it is hard to say whether you are more knave or fool. What you have said just now is pure nonsense, and for your honour I will strive to think you have been only a fool. But it is your despicable avarice that has made you so great a fool, and you are now justly punished for yielding to it. Have not I often warned you not to meddle with politics? Confine yourself to petty usury and small traffic—that is your field, and there you will always reap your profits; but you have not enough of general knowledge to enter into more important transactions, and you ever were a fool with regard to politics. Have you ever heard of such a thing as the States of Holland countenancing a loan which was to benefit the country with which they were engaged in war? Would not that be casting the balls that were to be fired off at ourselves? Can't you understand that?"

"Yes, yes; I understand it," cried Van der Néess. "I do understand it! But there is nothing of all this in these papers—not a word; this is a different thing altogether."

"If you supplied the country which was at war with Holland with money to prosecute that war, you did the same thing, and proved yourself a traitor, who, according to law and justice, should die on the gallows!"

"Gracious God! you would not?" shrieked Van der Néess, flinging himself on his knees before Hooft. "Oh, have mercy on me! Great God, I am a beggar already! A beggar! and you yet talk of punishment!—of the gallows! All is lost—all! The treasure I have so fondly hoarded—Angela's fortune—all—all gone! Noble burgomaster, think of Floris—of your darling—what will become of her? Think of her if—Ha! if you send her father to the gallows! Good God, I do not know what to say!"

Cornelius turned from him with feelings of utter loathing. His heart was ready to burst with indignation; but Van der Néess had artfully touched the right chord to move him. The thought of Floris disarmed him, and he began to consider what could be done to save Van der Néess, at least from public shame.

The latter instantly perceived the advantage he had gained. Mynherr Cornelius turned towards a window to recover his composure; as he contemplated the flourishing shrubs in his garden, the fragrant flowers, the hallowed repose and beautiful regularity of nature, he shuddered to think of the fearful state of degradation into which man alone can sink by his own free will when once he breaks loose from the control of his Holy Protector. The innocence and perfection of nature inspired Cornelius with the deepest pity for those who were under the influence of guilt and sin; his eye grew moist, and he inwardly breathed a prayer to God for assistance in this difficulty.

When he turned round he saw Van der Néess standing before him with an air of abject humility, holding the ill-fated papers in his hands.

"God knows whether I act aright in lending a helping-hand to conceal your crime," said Mynherr Cornelius; "but listen to me: I will do so only on one condition,—that you do not cross this threshold ere every one of these papers, which prove your guilt, be consumed by the flames in this grate."

Néess started back with a frantic gesture.

"Gracious God!" he shrieked. "What! burn all these documents, bonds, receipts—things as good as ready money, drawn out by the government of a kingdom? Burn all this in a fire, did you say?—lose all? You—you don't mean to say you think all this is worthless? Can't you help me, then, to recover my money—my own, and my Floris's fortune?"

"That's quite out of the question," returned Cornelius; "these documents have, either through inadvertence or design, been drawn up in such a manner as to impose no obligations on the succeeding ministers. The answer you have received might, I think, have convinced you of this. You have been informed that the minister considers this loan altogether as a private affair of his predecessors, since no mention is even made of any such loan in the financial registers of the former ministry, and especially as the papers you have forwarded in support of your claims are utterly destitute of any official character. Mark, therefore, the government refuses to acknowledge your claims, and so does the minister with whom you treated. He naturally declares your demand to be a debt of the government with which he has no concern, and there also he is in the right. But both parties are encouraged to treat you thus harshly, by the certainty that you dare not complain of them, nor apply to the States of Holland to procure you redress, though they would do so in any other case, because this whole transaction was an act of treachery towards these States. Do not you feel how contemptuously you are treated, and with what coldness and indifference the whole affair is spoken of? Our enemies may, indeed, love treason, but they will ever despise the traitor; and your stupidity and avarice have now placed you in this predicament."

"And yet," growled Néess, in a tone of dogged resolution, thrusting the papers in his bosom, "and yet I will not burn them. I shall not rest till I have my money; and if you will not assist me, I shall bid you farewell. You have sufficiently insulted me: go—you are a false friend; and your proud ideas and subtle distinctions teach you to affront those who are inferior to you. But, for all that, I shall find ways to enforce my rights. I am not the only person who has done such things in this

city; and now we must stand by each other. As to the States, I laugh at them; their ways are often crooked enough. No; I am not such a novice as you think me. Go! feed your fire with something else. I shall yet coin this combustible material into gold!"

Thus saying, he rushed furiously towards the door. Mynherr Cornelius caught him by the arm, and detained him for another minute.

"You are too much excited, and too unreasonable, ever to get yourself out of this difficulty; but, mark my words, if anything of this affair should transpire at the money-markets, or the town-hall, or anywhere, I shall denounce you, and demand your punishment. Floris will then be taken from you, and consigned to the guardianship of the chief burgomaster, and give up your name. You know that we possess the power to act thus, and I shall enforce it if the slightest hints of this disgraceful affair should get abroad.

"But I," shrieked Van der Néess, "forbid you to enter my house. Come, if you dare, and demand Floris; I shall teach you to remember Van der Néess as long as you live. If you will treat me like a wild beast, you shall learn what the bear will become if you attempt to rob him of his cub. And now my sweet and mighty sir guardian, now your petted wax-doll, who hitherto could wear nothing but silks and gauzes, forsooth! shall learn what it is to have a beggar for a father! She shall suffer for it now—so she shall—and if it were only to torment you."

With a furious jerk he freed himself from Cornelius's grasp, and, pushing him aside, rushed out of the room with a frantic yell.

After a few minutes, Mynherr Cornelius's valet looked in, much alarmed, and expressed great delight on seeing his master quite safe, for Van der Néess's frightful agitation and savage look, as he darted down stairs and out of the house, had inspired the domestics with the fear that he had committed some violence on their master.

Van der Néess, in the mean while, collected his scattered thoughts to find some means of escape. He took his way to the most disreputable part of the town, entered haunts of the most equivocal character, and held consultation with persons who dared not show their faces on the Exchange, but were ready to transact for others all affairs that shunned the light.

Through these persons Van der Néess sought to apply once more to the agents at Antwerp, who belonged to the same class of disreputable and proscribed members of the commercial world; and, spurred on by despair, he even resolved, in case this application should lead to no result, to set out in person for the court of Portugal, where he hoped he should be able more openly and boldly to assert his claims. Somewhat comforted by the assurances of these wretched accomplices, Van der Néess hurried home about noon. But the peaceful appearance of this home, with its comforts and its little luxuries, drove him to a new fit of despair. He was seized with fierce and bitter anger at the thought that up to that moment he alone was suffering, while no one in his house had as yet experienced any mortification or distress.

He hastened with a species of demoniacal delight to the place where his unsuspecting child was seated to destroy the peace she yet enjoyed. In the tumult of his feelings he hated even Floris, who, pale and sad, was gazing at the flowers in her court, and striving to interest herself in their

charms, and bury among them those sweet hopes which had enticed her to wander so far from them for the last two days.

Van der Néess glanced at her for a moment through a crevice in the door, and, enraged at her unconscious calmness, he called down a fearful curse even upon her head, and then burst into the court with fierce impetuosity, hoping thus at one blow to destroy her peaceful repose.

"In the name of Heaven what is the matter!" cried Floris, when she saw him rush up to her in the greatest alarm. "I did not know that any accident had occurred to you."

"An accident!" cried Néess, fiercely; "an accident do you call it? Fool! proud haughty fool!" he shrieked, rudely pushing her away from him. "Is it an accident that your father is become a beggar? Is it only an accident in your opinion that your father must take to carrying burdens in his old age, and Mynherr Caas live like a gentleman in comparison to him; —an accident—an accident! No! you will be the first to feel the consequences of the accident. Away! away! with all this finery; away with all those useless traps in the house and court. Your dresses must go to the haberdasher's; your flowers must be rooted up, and exchanged for bread —ay, for bread! I shall have the house cleared out even to-day. I shall have all the plate, the carpets, beds, utensils, ornaments, and all your follies, wherewith you have ruined your father, thrown together in a heap —and I shall send for the pawnbrokers, and those who deal in such frippery, and they shall carry off all this for bread—yes, girl, for bread I say —for bread, which your father has no longer the means to buy! And you, with your soft hands and smooth face, must henceforward learn to scrub and cook, for I can no longer afford to feed useless wenches and idle lackeys. As to Mynherr Caas, that grand gentleman, he shall find the walls too high, and the doors too thick, to admit him here. My precious young lady no longer requires a footman; she must learn to fetch home the dry bread herself, which will henceforth be our only fare."

Van der Néess might have said more, Floris would not have interrupted him, paralysed with horror, and suddenly aroused from her soft reverie to a reality more frightful than anything her imagination could have pictured. She at once perceived what was actually the case—her father really hated her; and as he jumped about before her, in the transports of his rage, his eyes darting forth glances of bitter hatred, she trembled for her life.

Poor Floris did not know that it was her immovable silence that drove him to such a state of frenzy; he was enraged at being unable to render her as despairing as he was himself, for this would have given him some satisfaction.

Perhaps only the timely appearance of Caas and the maid saved her from actual ill-usage; on them, Van der Néess vented his long-suppressed fury, and overwhelmed them with blows and cuffs, as many as they would bear, though not without receiving some in return, till finally he turned them out of the house without further ceremony. Poor Floris's terror, when she found herself alone with her father, was so fearful, that she threw herself at his feet, and cried, in a faltering voice, "For Heaven's sake, father, do not kill me! Let me not die by your hands."

This satisfied Van der Néess; he felt he had rendered her as wretched as he could wish. He then recommenced his description of the life she was to lead thenceforth; and, with savage joy, annihilated all the inno-

cent pleasures of his trembling child. When, at length, the picture was complete, even to the minutest particulars—it was but a fac-simile of the life to which he had doomed Gröneveldt's widow and daughter—he turned, with brutal satisfaction, to the remembrance of that wretched state of things, and fell back at once to the point where he was twenty years before. Angela's indefatigable exertions had been unable to change his disposition. Though he had for some time appeared a different person, this change was merely owing to the circumstances in which he was placed, and to which he submitted against his own will and inclination, as an inevitable necessity; and Van der Néess was once more a low, grovelling miser—a misanthrope, who looked with bitterness and envy on all mankind—a merciless tyrant, who loved to revel in his fierce passions. And in thus giving way to his old nature, he seemed to feel a sort of demoniacal satisfaction at being released from the constraint of years.

Floris felt so utterly and hopelessly wretched—so stunned and stupified at all she heard and saw—that Van der Néess met with no obstacle in giving full play to the horrible disposition which had been newly awakened within him. At length he started up, and rushed into the house, with the intention of despoiling the apartments of all the articles he had threatened to sell. He announced this to Floris, commanding her to stay where she was, and on no account to open the door to any one. He then repaired to the old banqueting-room, to begin his devastating course there, and locked the door behind him after he had entered. When Floris heard the lock turn, she uttered a heavy groan, and sank, fainting from her seat, on the ground.

Meanwhile Caas, who was convinced Van der Néess had lost his senses, and feared he would kill Floris, after soothing the screaming handmaiden, had hurried to Cornelius Hooft, to implore his aid in rescuing his poor, defenceless mistress.

Mynherr Cornelius had not been idle since Van der Néess left him. He had taken secret measures to discover whether any reports were as yet in circulation about Van der Néess, and had the satisfaction of ascertaining that nothing of this affair had as yet transpired, and, consequently, his accomplices seemed to be more prudent than he himself, and conscious of the risk they ran. He felt rather uneasy about Floris, and he was debating with himself whether he was called upon to attach any importance to Van der Néess's prohibition of his entering the house, as he longed to give the poor girl the protection of his presence, when Caas was announced. The poor fellow's distress was so visibly imprinted on his countenance that Cornelius started up in affright, and urged him to speak, scarce allowing him to recover his breath.

When Caas had delivered his faithful report, Cornelius no longer doubted that Van der Néess had lost his senses; and the thought of poor Floris being utterly in the power of this maniac so terrified him, that, scarcely waiting to put on his cap and cloak, he hurried through the streets even faster than Caas.

The latter followed, with Hooft's valet; but when they arrived in front of the old house, all attempts to procure admittance were fruitless. They knocked loudly at the doors, and threw pebbles at the windows. All in vain. The iron gate, as well as the doors of the house and of the

court of business, were locked, and, after the closest investigation, they could discover no sign of life.

At length Caas lost all patience, and determined to climb over the high walls of the court of pleasure. In spite of its height, he accomplished this feat, by mounting on Mynherr Cornelius's shoulders; but no sooner had he reached the top of the wall, whence he could look down into the court of pleasure, than he uttered a loud cry.

The poor fellow fancied he saw his worst apprehensions fulfilled, for Floris, who had received a slight hurt in falling from her seat, still lay motionless on the spot where we left her, her dress stained with blood.

"He has murdered her!" cried Caas, in despair. "He has murdered her; she lies weltering in her blood!"

Thus saying, he jumped from the high wall, and fell, half stunned, into Floris's soft flower-beds. His first impulse was to rush up to Floris. At the same moment,

"No, no!" cried Mynherr Cornelius, in joyful accents. "Heaven be praised, she is not dead, nor is she severely wounded; it is only a fainting-fit. But, God, God! who can tell what she may have undergone? I swear, by the God of Heaven, 'tis the last time she shall suffer in this house. She shall not be left any longer in the power of this monster, Van der Néess, who does not deserve the name of a human being."

Caas hastened to summon back the maid, whom Jacob had so rudely chased. Mynherr Cornelius then took Floris up in his arms, and carried her to her bedroom, where he left her to the care of this maid. Her consciousness slowly returned, though she could not immediately recal what had happened; but when Mynherr Cornelius approached the bedside, she immediately recognised him, and rewarded his anxious inquiries with one of her sweetest smiles.

"Rest and quiet will be the best things for her," said he. as he turned away. "She must be left in peace to collect her thoughts." And having given some directions to her maid regarding the treatment of her patient, he descended to the lower part of the house, to ascertain what was become of Van der Néess.

Finding the door of the old banqueting-room locked, he and Caas explored all the other apartments, in hopes of discovering him; but as their search proved fruitless, the idea flashed on their minds that he must be shut up there.

Encouraged by Mynherr Cornelius, Caas and the valet broke open the door with a hatchet. The first thing that met their gaze was the miser's heavy money-chest, which, as we have said, was placed in a recess of the wall, and secured by a door lined with iron. But on the present occasion both the door and the chest were open. Cornelius no longer doubted that Van der Néess would be found here.

As he advanced farther into the apartment, his conjectures were confirmed, for Van der Néess was lying on the ground, between the great oaken table and the strong-box. But he was not alone; another form lay prostrate half across his back. It was poor old Susa.

Cornelius shuddered, and started back a few paces. He at once suspected what, on closer investigation, proved to be the case,—THEY WERE BOTH DEAD!

An impenetrable darkness rested on their fate. Susa, who had grown

quite childish, had for years taken up her abode in the chimney corner of this apartment; here she would dream away her days in harmless inactivity, unconscious of all around her, except the presence of Floris, whose little hand she would often press to her lips, and that of Van der Néess. Her hatred for him was become a sort of instinctive feeling, for she had always known him from any one else, and on his appearance would mutter between her lips the word "Robber," which she yet remembered, and throw anything at him which she happened to have in her hand; nay, on one occasion, when he ventured to tease her, and approached somewhat too close to her, she angrily caught hold of him by his hair, and scratched his face so fearfully that he was disfigured for many days.

The most natural conclusion was that Van der Néess, under the influence of his excitement, had forgotten old Susa's presence, and locked her up with himself in the apartment. Probably some new ebullitions of rage, such as he was wont to indulge in when left to himself after any great agitation, had attracted her attention, and aroused her from her stupor, for all the chairs and tables were displaced, and this led to the supposition of some disturbance.

A fit of apoplexy had evidently seized them both, but it was impossible to guess how the struggle had arisen between them which seemed to have preceded it. Van der Néess had dragged a bag of gold out of his iron chest, and part of its contents lay scattered around him. Susa also grasped a piece of gold in the hand that was now closed in death. But the most remarkable thing was, that the unlucky papers which Van der Néess intended to coin into gold were torn to pieces; some bits were found in Susa's hands, and others in Van der Néess's, while the remainder lay in fragments around them.

Mynherr Cornelius ordered old Susa's body to be carried to a sofa. He gazed at her sunken features with feelings of respect and emotion. "Poor faithful creature," cried he, "even in thy last moments thou hast unconsciously struggled for the honour of the family to whose service thou hast devoted thy whole life, and, as if thou hadst been aware of the ignominy these papers would entail, thou hast destroyed them, perhaps, at the price of thy life!"

Van der Néess's countenance bore a frightful expression—even in death the traces of his fierce passions were still imprinted there, and it seemed natural enough that an attack of apoplexy should be the consequence of such fearful agitations as he had undergone.

Cornelius caused all the fragments of paper, as well as the scattered gold, to be collected, and having locked them away in the strong-box, possessed himself of the key.

His next care was to communicate the terrible catastrophe which so fearfully terminated the tragedy acted in the ill-fated house, to Floris, with every imaginable precaution.

On returning to her, he found her so pale and weak that he would not hazard giving her any hint of what had taken place. He obtained a promise that she would not leave her room till his return on the following morning; and replied, to her anxious inquiries regarding her father, that he had been seized by a fresh attack of the gout, and after being put to bed by Caas, had fallen asleep. Floris appeared so much relieved by this answer, that Cornelius no longer felt any uneasiness in leaving her.

He had sent for the coroner and undertaker, and charged his servants to make the necessary arrangements as speedily as possible; thus he had the satisfaction ere night to find every preparation made, and the two corpses laid out in their coffins, and placed on trestles beside each other, in the great banqueting-room.

Mynherr Cornelius fell into a deep and painful reverie as he gazed on these two lifeless forms, united in death after an enmity that had begun with the first day of their acquaintance, and continued inveterate to the last moment of their existence. An impenetrable mystery must ever rest on their latter end: yet it seemed but too likely that the last and greatest effort of this enmity had been to cause the annihilation of its object. But here, now, Van der Néess was forced to endure the presence of his enemy in silence. By a strange fatality, the scene of his fearful injustice—of his wicked oppression—and his wretched and tyrannical conduct over those who were entrusted to his care—had become also the scene of his death; at the moment, too, when he was preparing to plunge once more into the career of vice he had ever looked back to with regret, while he had breathed out his sordid spirit over the source of all his crimes—his gold.

"Oh," cried Mynherr Cornelius, with great emotion, "is not this a just retribution? How clearly we may trace the justice of Heaven even in this life, if we do not wilfully blind ourselves to the ways of Providence. Almighty Father! even on earth Thou art a just and righteous Judge! Woe to him who does not understand Thee. If he attempts to set Thy justice at defiance, he will soon be at variance with Thy providence, hate the world, feel enmity towards his brethren, and continue obdurate in presumption and sin to the end of his miserable existence!"

After this short funeral discourse, which Mynherr Cornelius involuntarily pronounced to the memory of Jacob Van der Néess, he turned away: and we shall follow his example, and turn, from the painful reflections such a character suggests, to his heiress.

Cornelius Hooft did not fail to pay his visit to poor Floris as early as possible on the ensuing morning, and as he found her much strengthened by her night's rest, though still very pale and sad, he proposed her coming down to the court of pleasure, and breakfasting with him in the fresh air.

He left her to give the necessary orders to this effect, and then waited at the bottom of the stairs. He was greatly affected at seeing her descend with a slow and cautious step, as if fearful of disturbing her father, while she seemed oppressed by some painful presentiment. On reaching the landing-place she threw herself into his arms, and with tears in her eyes inquired in a trembling voice for her father.

"He is sleeping," said Cornelius, in a subdued voice, as he led her past the door of the old banqueting-room where Van der Néess was, indeed, taking his last sleep.

Hooft wished to keep her in the dark till she had partaken of some nourishment, and been fortified by the fresh morning air for the painful and agitating tidings that awaited her.

But Floris was unable to enjoy the beauty of the morning; the oppression of her heart became more painful every moment. In obedience to her old friend she sat down under the balmy shade of the lime-tree, and attempted to partake of the breakfast he had prepared for her, but

her breath came thick and short; she started at the slightest noise in the house, and when Caas at length made his appearance, with a woful countenance, on which he vainly sought to force a smile, she could contain herself no longer, and bursting into tears, she cried—

"For Heaven's sake tell me what has happened? I feel some dreadful misfortune has occurred."

At that moment she saw her mother's old friend, Mynherr Harsens, appear at the door leading from the hall; she hastened to meet him, repeating in a faltering voice—

"Tell me, I beseech you, what has happened? Where—oh! where is my father?"

"He sleeps the sleep of ages," replied Mynherr Harsens, in a mild voice. "The burden of earthly temptations which rendered him so miserable and so unhappy has been taken from him. Come, my poor child, let us pray beside his coffin."

Floris paid her father the full tribute of filial affection; she seemed to have forgotten whatever could prejudice this feeling, and was so utterly disconsolate at the idea of his having parted from her in anger, that she had need of all her confidence in her old preceptor, Mynherr Harsens, to believe his assurance that no lasting reproach or irretrievable offence attached to her thereby.

She was so engrossed by the painful feelings this idea called forth, that the news of Susa's death made less impression on her than would otherwise have been the case, though it increased the sense of loneliness that had stolen over her sad heart.

Cornelius was unable to fulfil his intention of taking Floris away immediately from this house of mourning, for she insisted on keeping watch beside the dead bodies of her father and her old nurse. As she knelt beside the coffin of the former, her oppressed heart found relief in a flood of bitter tears, and the fervent prayers she addressed for him to the almighty Disposer of events deeply moved her sympathising friends.

"Verily," said Mynherr Cornelius, when, at length, the fierce expression of Jacob's features relaxed in death, and the wrinkles of his brow gradually faded away, "it would almost seem as if her prayers had brought him forth from hell, and this unhappy sinner had found mercy in the sight of his offended Judge for the sake of his angelic child."

"God's mercy is great," replied Mynherr Harsens, mildly.

When the remains of these last inhabitants of the old house of the Purmurands had been consigned to their eternal resting-places, Floris left the abode of her parents with Harsens and Cornelius Hooft, to repair to her aunt, who with maternal tenderness offered her a home.

Hooft proceeded to take an inventory of Van der Néess's effects. He received active assistance in this task from Harsens, who had become a celebrated preacher, and was then in the enjoyment of an excellent living.

No evidence could be found of the sums Van der Néess had contributed to the Portuguese loan beyond the very unsatisfactory bonds and papers which had been destroyed in his last struggle with Susa. The two gentlemen could not help shuddering as they consigned these fragments to the flames; but they discovered that almost the whole of the usurer's hoarded treasure was thus consumed thereby. This fact, which he could

not conceal from himself, must have rendered his last hours hopelessly wretched, while the agonies he had suffered in consequence, and the fearful agitation of his brain, had finally caused his death.

The treasure for which he had sinned so grievously, dooming himself and others to sorrow and misery, vanished from his grasp in the last hours of his life; and the curse of Gröneveldt, which his terrified imagination had caused him so often to hear, had at length laid him prostrate on the very spot where once he solemnly swore to protect the widow and the orphan, and to watch faithfully over their fortune, and where soon after he broke that solemn oath.

The sale of the old house and of Angela's jewels, added to the ready money found in Van der Néess's strong-box, produced a moderate sum, which Cornelius put out to interest, and which, at all events, would preserve Floris from absolute poverty.

By Angela's will, Mynherr van Marseeven had been named chief guardian to Floris; but after his wife's death he had retired from the government, and set out for Venice, where one of his daughters was established, and, in consequence of his absence, all the duties devolved on the other two guardians, Hooft and Harsens, who fulfilled their trust with scrupulous exactness. Cornelius even made an attempt to recover some part of Jacob's loan to the Portuguese government; but his exertions proved utterly fruitless, for the reasons we have before stated.

Floris continued to live with her aunt. In the society of this beloved relative she gradually recovered from the varied and painful agitations she had sustained. Undisturbed by the influence of domestic sufferings, the noble qualities of her mind had full opportunity to develop themselves; and, under Urica's judicious guidance, her understanding became cultivated, and her views enlarged.

Thus time rolled on. But during the course of the ensuing winter Urica's strength gradually decayed, and her anxious friends could no longer conceal from themselves that her dissolution was approaching. She was evidently aware of her situation, for all her plans and arrangements bore reference to her approaching death.

It was her desire that Floris should take up her abode with the Harsens after this event, in preference to entering into the family of the Marseevens, since the moderate sum she had inherited from Van der Néess would not enable her to live in the style to which she would grow accustomed in the burgomaster's house, and Urica felt great doubts as to whether her own original fortune would ever pass into Floris's hands. Owing to the improvement of his circumstances, Harsens now lived in a very comfortable and elegant manner, though he kept clear of ostentation and extravagance; and as his two daughters were married, he consented with pleasure to take charge of Floris, who, on her part, offered no objection to the wishes of her aunt.

Spring returned once more, but Urica's weakness increased with every day, and she expressed her fears that she should not live to see Lord Fawcett's return. She still felt great uneasiness with regard to his love for Floris. Mynherr Cornelius was a bad counsellor. To let the young people marry and be happy was the best plan, in his opinion, for he could not bear to see Floris look pale and melancholy, and would have gone to the ends of the earth to procure for her the object of her wishes.

Harsens, Urica's second counsellor, was too little acquainted with the circumstances to pronounce an opinion; yet he remarked that a mutual inclination was indispensable to the happiness of both parties in marriage, and, where this was known to exist, there might perhaps be serious harm done in preventing a union.

Mynherr van Marseeven's advice would have had most influence with Urica, as she had great confidence in his experience and knowledge of human nature; but she was deprived of this assistance, as he had not then returned from Italy.

Meanwhile, the letters she received from Lord Fawcett, and the accounts she heard of him through other channels, created a beneficial interruption to these anxieties.

He seemed to have cast off the indolence of his nature, and entered with energy on the duties of life. He had acquitted himself of his mission to general satisfaction, and spoke much of the delight with which he anticipated his return.

When Urica received these welcome letters, and marked with approbation the healthy tone of mind they indicated, she would often fall into a musing mood.

"Why should not I trust him?" thought she, at length. "Why should I interfere with his happiness, when I see that the faults that have so lately occasioned me sorrow and solicitude are now yielding to the powerful influence of manly energy and noble, undaunted resolution?"

Sometimes she would show these letters to Floris, and when the latter had read their contents over and over again, she would fix an earnest inquiring glance on Urica; and though neither of them spoke, Floris's youthful heart beat high, for she read sweet comfort in that gentle affectionate look of her aunt.

About this time, also, Urica heard of the death of the old Countess of Kilmaine. "Another obstacle removed," she thought, and she gazed with deep emotion at Floris; animated by new hopes, the lovely girl sat at her feet lost in a pleasing reverie. Urica could not behold her without emotion, and began to hope with her, that all the fears that had formerly influenced her decision might be dissipated.

At length Van Marseeven returned: Urica was no longer able to leave her bed; infinitely relieved by his presence, she confided to him all her fears and anxieties, her wishes and determinations, regarding the darling of her heart; and as she trusted implicitly in his judgment, she left the decision of Floris's fate in his hands.

Van Marseeven saw that Urica's hours were numbered, and therefore wrote off immediately to press Lord Fawcett's return.

But she did not live to see him again. Her pure spirit winged its flight from this world of trials; and as her sorrowing friends gazed on the sainted repose of her beautiful features, they felt that in this instance death had lost its sting.

Ulla, Urica's faithful domestic, anxious to pay a last tribute of respect to her departed mistress, insisted on being permitted to arrange the chamber of death. On the following day she summoned Urica's mourning relations. A number of young orange-trees in blossom had been placed around the room, and filled the air with their fragrant perfume. An open coffin was placed in the midst, surrounded with moss and flowers,

which contained Urica's beautiful form. A loose robe of white silk descended to her feet, and her delicate white hands were folded on her bosom; but the mysterious ring of the Casamborts no longer sparkled on her finger. Van Marseeven had solemnly delivered it to Floris, now the eldest and the last of the Casambort family, and placed it on the little finger nature seemed to have formed for its reception.

For years no eye had seen the luxuriance of Urica's beautiful hair; but now it was parted on her forehead, and fell around her like a golden mantle, while a diadem of rubies, which she had worn at her first marriage, graced her snowy brow. Her classic features, exquisitely lovely even in death, beamed with a smile of peace and happiness.

Floris and her surviving friends gazed in speechless admiration at this beautiful picture of death; they knelt down in solemn meditation, and their sorrow was turned into devotion.

At that moment a hasty footstep was heard advancing. Floris trembled. Lord Fawcett stood among the mourners.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, in a tone of the bitterest grief, "I am too late!"

"Not too late to pray with us," said Harsens—"not too late to read with us in the radiant countenance of this blessed one the certainty of the heavenly felicity that has fallen to her share! You have lost her for this world my young friend, but she has left you her blessing; and her pure spirit, no longer confined by earthly bounds, found comfort for this temporal separation, in the confident hope of an eternal reunion. May that hope also have a soothing influence on you."

When the first tumult of feeling had subsided, Harsens read prayers over the body, and Hooft and Van Marseeven succeeded in persuading Lord Fawcett, who was utterly absorbed by his grief, to quit the chamber of death.

After the interment of the corpse, Floris took up her residence with the Harsens, according to her aunt's desire; and the kind solicitude of her old preceptor and his excellent wife, soon made her feel at home in their comfortable dwelling. After the first weeks of mourning were past, during which nothing had occurred to disturb the unreserved meetings of the young people, Lord Fawcett acquainted Floris's chief guardian, Mynheer van Marseeven, with his sentiments towards her, and requested permission to address her. Van Marseeven heard this proposal without any signs of surprise, and told Lord Fawcett he had foreseen his intention, and should make no objection if Floris consented; but he made a point of acquainting the young earl with the precarious state of Floris's affairs, and proved that unless the claims were attended to which, in virtue of her aunt, she was entitled to make on the King of England, he would receive a portionless bride.

Lord Fawcett seemed relieved from a weight by this communication; he delighted to think that his beloved Floris would henceforward receive everything from him, and the dirty gains of the miser no longer adhere to her person.

After some consultation on the subject, Van Marseeven and the other guardians decided that the time had arrived for making use of the document which entitled Floris to assume the rank of Countess van Casambort.

The chief burgomaster represented that it would be advantageous by placing her more on a level with the proud family into which she was about to enter, and further might assist her claims on Charles II., by proving her right to succeed Urica in all her prerogatives; while, on the other hand, there was no one now living who could be wounded by her change of name.

He then proceeded to acquaint Floris with the existence of this document, and all the reasons which had prevented its being sooner put into force. Floris heard him with infinite surprise, and at first expressed great reluctance to change her name, as she deemed it a slight to the memory of her parents. But Van Marseeven proved to her that the grounds of Angela's former objections no longer existed, and as she had implicit faith in his judgment, she finally yielded to his advice, and assumed the title of Countess van Casambort.

When Lord Fawcett informed his beloved that he had received Van Marseeven's permission to address her, she no longer doubted that Urica had finally revoked the decision which had caused her and Henry so much pain. Time and absence seemed but to increase their mutual affection; and now that this great obstacle to their happiness was removed, the young Countess van Casambort no longer kept her lover in suspense, and as his duties demanded his return to London, she consented to his wishes for a speedy union.

Lord Fawcett took Caas into his service, and on perceiving his shrewdness and intelligence, and the good use he had made of the opportunities afforded him by the chief burgomaster, he promoted him to the office of his secretary, and thus gratified the poor fellow's utmost ambition.

On the day before the young countess's marriage, Van Marseeven was both surprised and gratified to receive an official despatch containing a cheque on the Bank of England for a part of Urica's loan, and a promise for the payment of the rest in regular instalments from Charles II.'s private fortune.

As the death of Urica was still too recent to admit of any public ceremony, the young Countess van Casambort was united to the Earl of Fawcett at an early hour of the morning, by her old preceptor, Mynherr Harsens, in the presence of all her surviving friends. After she had gone through the painful task of bidding them farewell, she embarked with Lord Fawcett on board a vessel held in readiness for him, and set sail for her new country.

As the shores of Holland receded from their view, Lord Fawcett glanced proudly at the beautiful girl who had so confidingly entrusted her happiness to his keeping; and as he pressed her fervently to his bosom, he swore to prove himself worthy of her love, and to justify the opinion she had formed of him.

DRAFTS FROM MEMORY ON THE BANKS OF HOLLAND.

BY MRS. WHITE.

No sooner does the voyager to the Netherlands lose sight of New Dieppe, with its arsenal and shipping, than he finds himself upon the confines of a land utterly unlike any other he has visited, and without its counterpart on the map of Europe. Now and then, on one side or the other, he perceives, starting, as it were, from the yellow waters of the Zuider-Zee, a cluster of trees, a church-spire, or a group of buildings, exhibiting precisely the appearance of objects looking through the sea-like haze that at morn and evening in autumn overspread the marsh-lands of England. Everywhere the hostile element is higher than the land, and hides the faint ridge of sandhills that form the boundary between them, so that, even at a small distance from the shore, you see nothing of the lower story of the houses, only their high-pointed roofs clustered together, and looking like those that children make with cards. Unfortunately, ships are not permitted to steam through that famous short cut, the Helder Canal, which would much facilitate the voyage; but as the distance by sea takes less time than towing through it, we made the personal acquaintance of the "rolling Zuider-Zee," and liked it less than Colman's song about it. We were, however, lucky enough to arrive at a favourable time of tide, and, though the propeller left frequent marks of its passage in the trail of black mud it turned up, crossed the Pampus (a shoal which forms the bar of the port) without difficulty, and found ourselves, thirty-six hours after leaving London, gazing on the domes and steeples, and quaint-looking houses of the ancient city of Amsterdam. The moment we land, our interest enlarges, and we forget that at this season of the year none of those adjuncts which render a metropolitan residence desirable, for its fashion or its amusements, are in existence; the wealthiest and most refined of its inhabitants are out of town, its "societies" scattered, its public places of recreation for the most part shut up. Still, that chief charm of travel, novelty, exists in abundance, and at every few steps we meet with something to strike the eye and merit our attention. It would be impossible not to admire a people who, with such disadvantages of soil and situation, have, by indomitable perseverance, sturdy labour, and patient enterprise, raised cities on the site of shoals and quagmires, and converted their naturally alluvial territory into rich pasture-land. The same reiterated industry that, pile by pile (through layers of peat, in some places, it is said, forty or fifty feet deep), laid the foundation of the city, and diked out its natural enemy, the sea, is still as active as ever in sustaining the victory it has achieved, and illustrates itself not only in *this*—which, if relaxed, would be followed by inevitably fatal consequences—but in the ordinary habits of the people. The homœopathical repairs bestowed daily upon their craft, the *niggling* neatness exercised in their houses, the superlative care by which everything is made to look as well, and last as long, as possible, does not arise from the contemptible spirit of grasping economy, but is natural to the idiosyncracy of a people obliged to exercise minute care, thoughtfulness, and a nice attention to mere details, as a condition of their national existence.

Commercial Englishmen, to whom (to use their own axiom) "time is money," laugh at the routine by which the barges on the Amstel are kept bright and sound, as if newly floated, and the overreaching prudence which detains their ships in dock rather than sail them at lower freights than they are accustomed to, but forget that this nice attention to small effects is so much a national characteristic as to distinguish their school of painting, and that to this principle of caution, under another form, they are indebted for the fact that, while peace and commerce have been driven from almost every other part of the Continent, the Bourse at Amsterdam is as much frequented as ever, and the port thronged, not with hostile ships of war, but wealth-bringing merchantmen.

The men who potter about on board their bees-waxed-looking barges, with a roll of putty in one hand and a paint-brush in the other, varnishing invisible scratches, and filling up the shadow of an opening in their seams, are the sons of those sure, but slow, workers who elevated the ninety islands which compose Amsterdam, and drove the 13,659 piles (pretty well for the foundation of a single building) upon which Van Kempen raised the magnificent Stadthouse that, in two hundred years, has not sunk a quarter of an inch. In a word, however, we, with our railway rapidity of action, our quick returns, and steam-hurried traffic, may laugh at the Dutchman's phlegmatic and plodding nature. It is essential in a land where the carriage of goods is for the most part performed by "trak bots" on slow canals, and the foundation of a man's house takes a longer period to complete than the after-building of it. On the other hand, the splendid results of this long-winded, indefatigable spirit of laborious resolution—call it what you will—cannot fail to awaken admiration when we perceive the disadvantages with which it has had to struggle. The city is a wonder in itself, and its existence a phenomenon from day to day. The breaking in of a dike, the overflowing of a sluice, and it would share the fate of the other "drowned lands" that form the legends of the Zuider-Zee, and return to the oozy salt marsh on which it stands. The ninety islands, with the two hundred and ninety bridges that connect them, are divided into streets and "grachts;" the latter have canals flowing through them, and a line of trees upon their banks. The form of the houses, all alike—and yet not one like its neighbour in point of height, form of windows, or style of decoration—have, viewed from the port, a very curious effect. Even those on the "Buiten Kant," which are for the most part private dwellings, and very handsome, exhibit the same versatility in point of adornment, though their general features are the same.

On the way to this part of the town, at the foot of one of those curious bridges—the construction of which Evelyn noticed two hundred years ago—stands a round, red-brick building, with a white tablet in the wall, on which appears a rude carving of a ship at sea, and a woman with uplifted hands watching its course from a tower; underneath is inscribed, in ancient Flemish, the words, "Scrayer horck," with the date, 1569. The building itself, however, is of much earlier origin; and is said to be coeval with St. Anthony's Gate, the most ancient in the city, and one of its boundaries in the thirteenth century. In those times, and long after, the "Weeping Tower," as it is called (the literal translation of the antique words above), stood far out, at a considerable distance from the town, and was the last point from which departing vessels could

be seen. Here, therefore, the women came to take their farewell gaze of those most dear to them; and here, it is said, one fair young vrouw died of grief at separating from her husband. It is now used as a "kantoor," or excise-office; but the carved legend on the wall—its quaint appearance, with the pathos of its name and history—despite its present purpose, and the very practical, hard-featured, blue-jacketed, brass-buttoned men one always sees trying the focus of their telescope at the upper step of the doorway, retains a degree of even poetic interest. Only a short distance farther on, about the centre of the "Buiten Kant," you see the carved medallion of a man's head, supported by naval and warlike trophies, half-way up the front of one of the houses—it is that of De Buiter, whose name appears beneath. And this was for some time the dwelling of the admiral, the Nelson of the Netherlands. One cannot but be interested in this conservation of his home, so indicative of the enthusiasm with which his memory is regarded, or refuse—for all the triumphant assurance graven on his tomb, that he planted his flag at Chatham—our sympathy with feelings so nearly allied to our own. He lived in an age when rapiers were more influential than goosequills, and the only arbitration thought of between nations, that of might and the sword. We, as a maritime people, know well the ancient value of these arguments; and if we are now in a position to be amongst the van in the almost apostolic mission of peace, it is because war, which had its mission also, in dying out, has left us heirs of that stability, and wealth of arts, and increase of intelligence, which its red hand gathered for us, "when the fight was done," in every field, from Acre down to Waterloo.

But to pass on: only a stone's throw from the "Buiten Kant," we find the "Entrepôt Dock, Arsenal," &c.—all very perfect in their way, but possessing few points of novelty for visitors familiar with those of Sheerness and Portsmouth. We will, therefore, proceed at once to the Botanical and Zoological Gardens, which appear on either side of *Les Arbors;* so that the summer places of amusement lie altogether, and the cornet-à-piston of Frascati's orchestra penetrates the palm-houses of the one, and the alleys of the other, and the interval between them may be walked in a few minutes. Here, for half a franc, one may spend a day very pleasantly in botanising. The garden is small, but well filled, and possesses a very beautiful collection of Cape plants, and a deputy-superintendent extremely intelligent and obliging. We found him delighted to have the opportunity of exercising his English, and loud in his admiration of the scholarship and botanic skill of a fair countrywoman of ours, Mrs. Wr——d, of the Heath, Hampstead, who had spent some time in Amsterdam the previous summer, and had visited the garden daily. She was one of the exceptions he had found to the haughty manners of English visitors generally, who, doubtless, for the most part, regard M. Vander Brink, in his straw hat and round-toed *klompen*, as a part of the exhibition, and his dates, Latin names, and flower histories—unless, indeed, they be botanists themselves—as one does the oral traditions of the guides in Greenwich Hospital, the Abbey, or St. Paul's. A horticulturist by profession—a writer from instinct—a lover of poetry and literature—a ransacker of old chronicles, and collector of rare books,—nothing can exceed the modesty and simplicity of this young man, who seems perfectly unaware of possessing a higher order of attainments than one would expect from a person of his cramped opportunities,

whose only time for study (apart from that of his art) is stolen from his hours of rest. His intelligence is the only trait comparable with his modesty, unless it be (where he sees it really wished for) the readiness with which he imparts it. We noticed, in the hot-houses here, a large species of light-brown beetle, bred in the tan, the male of which is distinguished by a formidable horn, projecting with a slight curve upwards from the front of the head, and which we do not remember to have met with except in collections at home. Twelve years ago the garden appeared cut up into small square beds—perhaps the very form in which Linnæus saw it, or, more primitively still, that in which it existed at the date of Evelyn's visit, in 1641, thirteen years after its foundation. There are some beautiful specimens of the talipot-tree, with its stem wrapped up with hairy fibres, as if Nature had matted it for travelling. The poisonous euphorbia—with which the Caffres render their arrows deadly—is trained against the wall, and "pandamus horridus," armed with terrific spines, lifts its triangular, sanguine-coloured body, upon pile-like roots, which it drives down according as its growth and weight requires them. Here the supposed sycamore of Scripture puts forth its golden fruit beside the Nile plant, "papyrus antiquia;" and there the bread-fruit tree raises its notched stem under a crown of leaves, spread forth like feathers. Anything more beautiful than the velvet ones of the arrowroot-plant, their rich green surface, shaded and underlined with purple, it is impossible to paint.

But the wonders of this exotic repository (for general visitors) are the water-plant, with its hidden reservoirs, and the "nepenthes distillatoria," whose green pitchers, at the period of our visit, were in their prime. There is the whole family of palms, with cocoas, bananas, and Indian-rubber trees—"siphonica elastica;" in fact, specimens, but not collections, of almost all the plants introduced into Europe, as well as those indigenous to it. It is quite wonderful (at the small sum charged by the city for admission) that it is not more generally frequented; but, except the students who have the right of *entrée*, the majority of its visitors are strangers, and on any occasion of our going there we never saw above one or two persons walking about; yet, if only for the simple love of flowers, and the charm of shade and odour, one would think it would be a favourite retreat in summer, with at least the fairer portion of the inhabitants. The Zoological Garden, on the contrary, has nothing to complain of on the score of patronage; it has its visitors daily; and on Sundays, after two o'clock, a continuous throng of them, at double the price charged at the Botanical; but, then, to the attractions of living lions, &c., a museum of comparative anatomy, with a fine collection of shells and fossils, there is superadded handsome refreshment-rooms, fragrant alcoves, and shady paths. Here the company take their coffee, sip sherbet, or drink wine; nor is there any veto in existence against the use of that privilege, without which no paradise would be perfect to a Dutchman—smoking is allowed *ad libitum*. The family-man puffs on beside his partner, a fair "*vrouw*," whose face, like a sea becalmed in sunny weather, has but one expression—that of perfect placidity; cigars and sentiment take the parterres, or stroll within the green screen of the alleys; but in no case do you see the one abandoned for the other. We almost question if gallantry in the Netherlands would make any progress at all without the inspiration of tobacco! Amongst the curiosities in

the museum, they show you a small shell, on the mother-of-pearl lining of which is distinctly portrayed the miniature-head of a boy; it is extremely curious, as there is no appearance of its being artificially done,—on the contrary, it is neither raised nor depressed, but appears to be caused by a difference of colour only; how it should have taken the form it has, and with so much accuracy, appears unaccountable. In one of the cases of stuffed animals is the preserved figure of an ourang-outang, who may be regarded as one of the public benefactors of the city—having produced by his exhibition, when alive, 1700 guilders, which were presented to the poor in 1845; he only survived his translation from the East twelve months.

But now for the park. A handsome avenue, lined with a double tier of elm and lime trees, and as level and firmly-gravelled as a garden-path, leads from the Zoological Gardens to the gates of the "Hortus Botanicus," which is on a line with it; the one opening on the right hand, the other on the left; and not a stone's throw from the last is the *plantaadge*, or, as it is called, with a triple roll of the "r," Pa-r-r-rk. In France, last summer, they used to say that the revolution had induced a double aspiration of this letter; but the sound of the French republican "r" is nothing to the prolonged roll of the same consonant in the Netherlands. Nothing can be more dissimilar to our notions of a place with this name than "les petit arbores" at Amsterdam—a few narrow paths, shaded with trees, converging to a centre, in which seats are sprinkled, with a broad walk on either side, and an enclosure dedicated to the members of certain *societies* who meet at Frascati's during the winter months; for every circle in the social sphere of Amsterdam is divided into societies—a species of family-club—which have their regular winter and summer rendezvous, these in the town, the others in the suburbs, for the purpose of conversation, dancing, concerts, &c. Twice a week, then, besides Sundays, the orchestra plays—the beaux air their dogs, and the ladies their Parisian bonnets; and a few unique specimens of coach-building, with an English brougham or two, wait for their freights at the gate, or make the circuit of the avenues in slow time. A few hours later, when the exclusives have withdrawn, it is thrown open to the general public on payment of a franc each, with the addition of a vast quantity of flambeaux, and *forté* demonstrations on the part of the band; Meyerbeer and Rossini give place to Russel and Julian, and the "Royal Irish" and "Mary Blane" appear just as much at home as at the Surrey Gardens, or in the popular vicinity of the "original Bones." The sentiment, nursed amongst the birds and flowers of the Zoological, becomes a less abstract feeling in the alcoves of the illuminated *plantage*, and (alas! poor human nature!), "be thou as chaste as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny," intrigue is said to be just as rife here as elsewhere. There are other public promenades on the outskirts of the city, and plantations in the vicinity of the different ports; for as nature never makes woods in the Netherlands, the inhabitants endeavour to indemnify themselves by planting trees wherever it is possible—not merely for their beauty and the pleasant shade they afford, but for the purpose of strengthening and binding the embankments, which the interweaving of the roots with the soil do very effectively.

Not only are the public roads converted into avenues throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the "grachts" are planted on either side with rows of linden, or elm, or chestnut, which, in Evelyn's time, made the emperor's street (the "Kiezer's Gracht") appear "like a city in a wood,

through the goodly ranges of stately lime-trees before every man's door at the margent of that goodly aqueduct or river, so curiously wharfed with clinkers (white sun-baked bricks), of which the spacious streets on either side are paved." Both this and the "Heeren Gracht" retain the imposing appearance here described; and with their hanging festoons of carved-work, their richly-ornamented roofs, tall, and, for the most part, violet-tinted windows, and door-lights (to make them range of the same height) glittering with golden stars on a black ground, have a very striking and even magnificent appearance. In the business-streets, and the less private "grachts," the houses, as we have said before, though all alike, are yet all different—evidently the offspring of a single architectural type—all tall and narrow, with high carved gables turned to the street; there is a difference in their tallness, and not one in the whole line will be found to bear a facial resemblance to its neighbour; all are studded full of windows and ornate with scrolls, and foliage, and bas-reliefs; but neither in shape, size, or colour, are the windows of one house like another, neither is there a particle of likeness in their individual adornments; some have dark green "persiennes" on the outside, some light green blinds within, some are tinted blue, some coloured violet, and others *couleur de rose;* some are square with small panes, others tall and narrow, with French casements; some will have three windows on a story, in which case its neighbours on either hand will be sure to have less or more; but they all agree in the article of crane heads projecting from the fronts of the houses, and the little slanting mirrors at the side of the windows, which, without looking out, enables them to see all that passes.

Apropos of look-outs, perhaps the windows of our inn, in the Warmoc-straat, commands as animated a view as any in the city; there is, to be sure, little to be seen at the front but the shops and the passing of foot-passengers, for the street, though one of the principal ones, is not wide enough for two carriages to pass abreast—a possibility, perhaps, undreamt of at the period of its creation, when only physicians and great men were permitted to use them, and these only by paying a heavy tax, lest their vibration should be found injurious to the pile-supported city, a law which still enforces the removal of all merchandise by sledges—but the windows at the back look out upon what is called, *par excellence*, the Water, and has the Bourse for its limit at one end, and that momently-recurring feature in Amsterdam, a bridge, at the other. Opposite is a very busy "gracht," with a long line of irregular-looking, narrow-fronted, red, white, and brown houses, with various-coloured windows and stone facings peeping through the green boughs of elm-trees which fringe the banks, and drop their leaves upon the decks of the bright-sided craft moored under them; these, with their long, spangled pennants, Dutch tricolored and painted flags, their varnished hulls and verdant bulwarks, their tiny windows with white muslin curtains, carved tiller-heads, and no end of brass-work about them, have a much livelier air upon their native waters than we should be inclined to give them credit for, especially when the sailors' *vrouws*—generally North Holland or Friesland women—happen to be on board, the former with her head half-helmeted in plates of gold or silver, the latter with a glittering band across her forehead, and ornaments of the same precious metals shining above the little bunch of curls on either temple, under a light lace cap with an extraordinary depth of border behind.

But, to return to the "gracht." As soon as the palace clock chimes a quarter to three, the exchange bell rings, and the pavement grows black with broadcloth; burgomasters, merchants, brokers, and shipowners are all hurrying to the Bourse, anxious to save a quarter-guilder fine, inflicted if not within its doors when the hour strikes and the bell ceases; and, as this "gracht" is the nearest way from the Wester and Ooster Docks and Buiten Kant, it is of course generally taken. On—on, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, Hollanders—one wonders where they all come from, smoking, chatting, smiling, bowing, examining note-books and bills of lading; some solitary, but for the most part in social groups—three or four together. The ringing of the bell, and hurried congress of burghers, all hastening to the vicinity of the Hotel de Ville, has, for one ignorant of this their custom always of an afternoon, rather an ominous sound and appearance. If from France, the tocsin and national guard occur to him, and he expects to hear the rappel beaten, and see the windows thrown up, and the tricolor flaunt out, forgetful that in this commercial city property is differently regarded from what it is at Paris, and peace and order of much more interest to the careful inhabitants generally, than the glorious, but unripe cry of "Liberté—Egalité—Fraternité!"

As they swarm by, a lady passes with her husband, and, though a stranger, every hat is successively raised to her; a custom which puzzles one at first, but is requited by a return of the courtesy at the hands of our male companion; or, if alone, a lady receives it as the homage offered to her sex, not herself, and no acknowledgment is required.

The Bourse is a plain, solid structure, of very modern construction, taxed, like an Irish estate, with the liabilities of its predecessor, in the shape of a privilege, "more honoured in the breach than the observance," which the children of the town claim in favour of one of the Kalver-street Burgomaster's School boys, who, at the period of the Spaniards' attempts to subjugate the country, and during their attack on Amsterdam, discovered, while playing near the Bourse, that powder had been secreted beneath it, for the purpose of destroying the burgomasters and merchants. His timely alarm prevented the calamity; and being offered any reward he desired, he is said to have requested for himself and all the boys of the city to be permitted annually, during fair-time, to beat their drums in front of the Bourse. Time has not annulled this obligation; and on the second Monday in September, the opening day of the fair, every boy in Amsterdam claims his part in the drumming, which lasts, during certain hours, for the week. The intolerable din drives the merchants from the Bourse in despair, and loudly reminds them of their hereditary obligation to the Kalver-street charity children, which obligation has, in modern times, been renewed in the self-sacrifice of Van Speyk, who was one of them.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

The Porch.

Chapter I.

As I advanced in my devious way through life, all experience tended to confirm me in my adoption of tragedy as a literary pursuit. It is true that I had practised painting with as much industry as ever artist bestowed upon his craft, and had covered my walls with representations of the classic drama; but now the dominant impulse of my mind was to travel in the soul's direction, to go on until I had felt all my being; and while thus engaged in acquiring fresh knowledge of human things, as expressed through my own types of the universal, to rigidly cultivate that pure art which best awakens passion in others by means of words, as it had been roughly excited within me by deeds, and so to fulfil no common destiny. Since the occurrence of late events, I felt as if my vocation had been revealed, as if no transient light had dawned upon me. With other views than formerly I began to regard my early sorrows: they appeared now to be the mellowed sources of inspiration, such as poets crave; the living memorials of Nature seen on her troubled sides. I ceased to repine at a lot not happy; it appeared marked out for exaltation, a fruit of the ways of Providence, offspring of a higher wisdom, the aim to create a sufferer who had power to instil sympathy into human breasts. I beheld good springing up in fountains eternal, out of evil which had ceased to afflict; new hope rising grandly, almost dispassionately, in many pleasing forms upon the ancient pedestals of despair. For, in the dramatic world, sorrow revives no more as a misfortune, but as a glory; the signal of heroism, the high emotion wherein great men rise superior to all save doom. As the machinery of Truth thus unrolled her wheels before my eyes, laws hitherto unknown in the moral world were evolved, declaring a force of necessity over things that be; a force I hailed as just, under whose saving constitution the charter of free-will itself had been conceded to each living thing.

And then all that was tragical, the mournful thought and sad expression, affected me profoundly; it seemed to touch me with a feeling which, in seriousness of purpose, resembled religious awe. A fine image had all the importance of a divinity in my mind, and would strike me to earth in unutterable piety towards the sources unknown of the sublime. I began in my new walk by making a rapid survey of the historic field, and, as others had already done, by abstracting the ideal features in their most engaging aspect, for of such transformation are they capable in a master's hand. Then the mighty triumphs of vengeance arose before me in spiritual grandeur; retribution had its hour, justice its final sway.

Having an object in the pursuit, I found myself at times sympathising with the living whose lot was wretched, the foremost of whom I was myself. But I had learned to defy calamity at large; desiring ardently that affliction might befal me, if only to hail its advent as a lesson. I began

to regret my reserve which had tended to limit the circle of my sympathies, and to render so few dear to my heart. But misfortunes were many in that day; and when trouble befel my friends I partook intellectually of its lowering influences, and deeming myself rich in experience at another's expense, the description into which it merged was not the less expressive.

I resumed my costly entertainments at the Aula Palace, and invited almost nightly the most heartless among the great. And what uncommon beings were some of these! The cool conspirator, the bolder assassin, even that modern Brutus himself, Lorenzino! how wild was their aspect, how graceful their intercourse with the refined, how engaging their manner towards the fair! Then I saw the discrepance between men's actions and the true end of their being, and was diverted by it from the tragical to the sarcastic—that moral frontier over which the damned and the holy recreate their wits at the expense of the feeble minded. The confiding epicure (always mild in conversation), the pleasant libertine, the thoughtful sycophant, the hypocrite of many virtues, all found a welcome within my doors. I loved to contemplate them not only in the present moment, so important to themselves, but as creatures floating down the stream of eternity hereafter; not overlooking their passage through the cemetery where the green lichen would succeed the last vibration of the selfish heart! And so far from shuddering at my own misanthropy, I almost desired a commission from Heaven to put an end by my own devices to the wasteful career of those around me. In the midst of all this want of love for others, self-sympathy alone was not extinct. On the contrary, my sensibility on every subject that concerned myself was diseased. A mere expression having any association with my past life would recal distress, and wounds, accidentally ripped open, would bleed afresh; but the soliloquy, now wasted no more, was inscribed on tablets that it might melt the hearts of men.

All this is true of that time; an unhealthy epoch of limited duration, but not the less to be recorded, since it forms a distinct link in the historic chain. It yields a study of nature, though in her least attractive phase; nevertheless, it was not unproductive of ideas, such as have since met with applause among the very creatures out of the rottenness of whose character they first sprung.

From this state of mind I passed to another, neither more amiable nor just. I seriously considered whether there were not legitimate opportunities, in troubled times like those, to work out the laws of human suffering in men, whom it had been a virtue to torment; wretches whose unpunished crimes had prospered, who, formed by nature to perpetuate evil, had no conscience wherewith to repent of their misdeeds. My thoughts ran wild against those oppressors whose cold-hearted policy I had seen at play in the midst of my country's struggle! How many maxims of government did I not hear uttered to justify, almost to give sensibility to, the decisions of the stony heart—maxims which moved the blame of human misery from priestly councils on to the huge shoulders of Providence itself! And scarce less hateful than the tyrants and their ministries was the literary circle of that day, which I shunned with marked antipathy, consisting as it did of ignorant and pitiful men. Most of them had risen from the social dregs into mortal distinction; all were devoid of respect for real greatness. Had Dante himself lived among

them, they would have silently resisted his claim to glory until, by his unaided efforts, he had secured the prize. Many in the world at large are princes by nature, few by position; those who have vast possessions may display their dignity; those who are poor must be obscure. So is it with genius! Who knows the literary man of that time who has stood forward with disinterested love to promote the welfare of another, whose struggles had not yet won him the affections of mankind?

Had I been born the wretch who, endowed with virtue and genius, is clad by the donor of such gifts in rags and fed on refuse, my eccentricities must have met resentment, and my pretensions have been trampled on by the illiterate world. But, as the possessor of honour and gold, man almost asked to be insulted by me. Well did he bear my moroseness, which even increased his urbanity, as if supplying a new motive to the flatterer.

There were times, certainly, even then, when I was courteous and cheerful; but these were like the second summers which mock the haggard autumn of the new world, and have no sooner raised the spirits of men than they suddenly depart and leave the decay of nature to proceed unchecked. My mind was agitated by great and complicated passions, but it was not always that I allowed it to be thus a prey to itself. It was rather like a tyrannic government which plants spies in its own heart, in the very centre of its subsistence; the breast a prison in which the free-born passions struggled in irons. In my soul I recognised an iron-crowned divinity controlling the boundless empire of self.

With my own passions thus rising against me, it was often a fearful task to overawe this inward mob, and save the soul from the horrors of civil war. Yet not only effected I this, but more; I preserved the exterior aspect of repose. I smiled peacefully on those I disliked; I blessed the creatures for whose annihilation I could have almost cursed myself, and died. Still the struggle for peace was not all concealed, and then, among other expedients, I would proceed to the church of St. Lorenzo, and, at the tombs of mighty men, learn that exalted calm in which the dead abide. Or, after some of these passionate outbursts, I have sought the nearest mountain solitude. There, to prove to myself how tranquil and self-complacent I had become, I have drawn forth the dagger which I wore always, on whose point was engraved the magic name, and have felt that to touch my heart with it would be to transfix her unconsenting soul with mine in dying ecstasy; and yet I have returned the loved idol to the sheath with a playful smile. And then have I felt with exultation that my army of passions was disciplined, that my spiritual warriors were organised for battles not yet at hand.

Thus is the career of genius like that of a comet among the fixed stars of life. It rolls in an eccentric orbit; suns can arrest it not; its flame is the wonder of the universe, the terror of worlds; an unconscious record in itself of nature's greatness.

And what power does it not confer on the wicked—on those to whom wickedness is no more than the free enjoyment of passion! Thus reasoning within myself, I have stretched my limbs across a loose fragment of mountain, and defied the mass to descend. I have whispered to the passing cataract, "Genius alone was insufficient for one who had to pass through a triple ordeal unscathed; so it was gilded with the madness of hope, that enthusiasm which smooths the rugged ways of earth. I have

coined the true image; adopted it as my own; presented it to my fellow-sufferer as a token. How, without the strength of inspiration which a mild insanity puts forth, is such effigy to be borne? But none shall discover my secret: I conceal it in caverns of the soul deeper than those through which your hissing waters betray their course; my power lies in its magic! You may bear my secret to the winds, instil it into the rivers and seas as they engulf you; but you cannot betray it to man. He shall feel it, and know it not: for in my reason will I conceal it; and that power is as strong within me still, and as sane as the heavens themselves!"

Having thus whispered in the ear of Nature, I have risen again and been quiet as the air after a storm. Strange to say, it was such outbursts as these which led me to discover that peace which, I at last so fully attained to, was the highest attribute of the soul. Be calm, ye philosophers; to murmur at your lot is to disturb the dead who sleep beneath your feet. Then imitate the peaceful: let the works of God be your model, but the mildness of His Son your example—a mildness more miraculous than the voice which stilled the tempest and convulsed the grave. Let your madness even be tranquil: all things are possible with God—most things with men!

With all this, how conscious was I that my progress as yet was that of moral degradation. I was in the midst of sins which I abhorred; which I myself committed; and which yet seemed not my own, but those of man. Why was it thus? I was to be the sufferer of my race; to be made a sacrifice for the heathens of my line; and there can be no suffering without a consciousness of sin! So was it, then, that Virtue, now that she was my companion, had become as a sport in my hands, and seemed what many deem her, the mere creation of philosophy. Her practical bearings, certainly, were contradicted hourly in the business of the world, and her worshippers had the look of dreamers.

In these moods I lived; my heart still burning with good, my steps sinking deeper into evil. Yet, I was not of the world!

Chapter II.

I sought Orazio at the Casino: he was only staking money; but such was his eagerness, that had the universe been his, he would have gambled away the worlds, and, these lost, he would have almost staked his own existence. When the fever is over the gamester feels that he has been a fool, but, while it lasts, not a voice from heaven could convince him that he should desist, unless it promised to make him richer than his antagonists and their united resources. I knew this, and waited until I found him at liberty.

It so happened that in an hour from the time I entered, he had won so much money as to have reduced three or four nobles to beggary.

Orazio was flushed with success; I approached him, for my sister's sake, with the intention of asking him to my castle. He had been there but once since his marriage, and then only at the funeral of Moro. By more hospitably reminding him of the period when he had liked me best, I thought to rouse his old affection for Angela. When he saw me in such a forgiving humour, at the same time being well pleased with him-

self, his mind, by a coincidence not strange, reverted to the period when I had most served him, and, to my surprise, he himself proposed a visit to the Volterrana, in which we should be accompanied by my sister. I was willing to forgive him the injuries he had done me. I told him that I had come on purpose to invite him; so it was arranged that, on the following day, we should leave the town. But our renewed affection was soon at an end, for a friend of Orazio's had, meantime, arrived at Florence, and claimed his presence at the table to fulfil an old engagement; he remained, and I abandoned him once more to the living vengeance of Moro!

I began to study my sister's sorrows—to keenly witness how her bosom suppressed the sob, how the tears fell with scarcely a corresponding expression of grief. She was too good to complain, and the shadows of distress darkened her spirit rather than her face. We had, by tacit consent, refrained from mentioning Orazio's name! I felt every day more and more disposed to rescue her from her sad position. How beautiful she looked in smile-subdued affliction!

I believed that Orazio still adored Angela in his heart: had he been visited by misfortune he would have sought solace in her alone. But, alas! there is no other misfortune than poverty with worldly men; and, as my sister's dowry was secured to her, he could never feel the gripe of want. Strange world! He ranked his wife among the statues of his palace; but, as she was his only true happiness, it was natural that he should neglect her.

It is remarkable that the imaginative are able to foresee the worst that can happen, and often they experience mentally the details of their future misfortunes; but, instead of avoiding the path which leads to trouble, they rather pursue it with the confidence of men inured already to its dangers. On the other hand the prudent, who have no fancy to bear them on its wings, can realise no such vision, and avoid whatever evil they anticipate with an instinctive aversion. I saw that Orazio's hour was come; the reign of terror which he had exercised over me had created a reaction, the result of which I indistinctly foresaw, while I laughed at my late feeble effort to avert it. But the prophetic state of feeling which made me acquainted with this truth was different to that which I had undergone on former occasions. Before, there had existed a dreadful anxiety—an eagerness in company with my resolves, such as is felt by a new ruler in the popular cause; but now, the practice which I had gone through had softened my efforts into a sentiment of tranquillity. The hasty stride across my chamber, the fierce exclamation, did not characterise my proceedings. Reclining rather at full length on a downy couch, I thought over the particulars of a new battle, avoiding carefully the evils which had betrayed me before, and smiling while I negligently rehearsed the scenes.

I remained in this quiet state of mind for some days, awaiting the arrival of the hour which was to incite me to action, not for my own sake, but for the peace of Moro's soul, and the fulfilment of my vow to his dying ear. I saw it approach too soon, for while seated in my study one evening the history of Orazio seemed to pass smoothly over my mind like a vessel on calm waters. Unexcited, I saw my brother conspiring against my life, and coveting the lands of my inheritance. I saw myself on the eve of being dragged to a prison, like a criminal, owing to his false accu-

sation of me concerning the murder. Yet I felt that I had maintained myself superior to his arts, and that I had power to provide for my own safety. Perhaps I was in some degree moved at my sister's lot, for what a painful void was there in my heart on her account! It was the neglected seat of friendship—the place where Orazio might have been. By its side there was another cell of affection, where, faithful as a nun, lived my sister still. Her husband had spurned her side in my heart; widowed, deserted, in tears, her form dwelt within me!

I went to the Via Romana, where Orazio and Angela lived. My carriage drove into the court of their palace. I entered, I ascended the steps, I walked into the presence of Angela, she flew into my arms. A floodgate seemed removed from between our emotions which rushed into each other, and were lost in one troubled flood.

Oh, affection! that I had been set apart for thee! Who was more alive to tenderness, who perceived with sweeter gratitude its humanising effects? I loved my sister above all worldly objects; her devotion, her kindred love entranced me, it quelled my passions, it suspended me in the midst of beatitude! Beautiful, angelic being! she departed early for heaven; she entered its distant convent in her youth; she has taken the veil of glory! But for her premature fate I might have been an unbeliever; but my eyes could not follow all her loveliness into corruption. It is true I traced the withering of that plant of Paradise; the dispersion of each flower! And I looked upon the haunts where she had rested; all was gone: the flowing garment found no form wherefrom to borrow grace, the mosaic of her boudoir uselessly awaited her footsteps, the marbles which she had worked into smiles of joy had caught the sadness of the air—smiles which thenceforth expressed, alas! we are only survivors! But it was merely the earth which was thus cypress-shaded by desolation—my love followed her afar, and whenever I looked above I saw her mingling with the angels.

Great, indeed, was my affection, and at this interview it was at its height, like the sky in a sunburned heaven. I spoke of it with fervour, and implored my sister to live no longer in sorrow, but to accompany me to my home. On this occasion my arts of persuasion were exercised with ill-success: she shuddered amidst her tears at the idea of quitting that new home, although it had disappointed her earliest hopes and pleasures, and replaced them with the phantom of love. Orazio had once prized her; she could not now remove herself from the scene of his affection. And as he loved no other, she fondly anticipated a return of his eyes to her fair beauty, of his smiles to her devoted gaze. As I stood, half-deterred from pressing my solicitations further, I thought of my father's words, his fatal love; my mind then passed to all those unhappy creatures whose lot had resembled his, and, succeeding to this train of reflection, the idea of Moro rushed through my brain, his cold hand grasping mine, his impressive look attracting my spirit upwards, and wresting from it a vow too earnest to be forgotten. At the remembrance a frenzy seized on my frame; my heart was maddened. My first impulse was to destroy the statues or to hurl myself on the ground, for a sudden strength possessed me which I could not control, nor, without violence, exhaust. I set fast my teeth, I looked around; the roof and walls of the apartment seemed to await but an outbreak of my stormy spirit to fall a mass of ruins. Without knowing precisely what I was about, I seized on Angela and rushed to my carriage

with the prize. Meeting with some resistance from domestics, the touch of my hand overthrew every one who came near me; some lay prostrate in the corridor, others clung to the palisades, or rolled down the marble steps like masses of inanimate matter. Meantime, I reached my chariot, and was not long in conveying my sister to the palace whence I came.

I took her to her olden chamber. She had fainted, and was as pale as the white rose, all animation being for a long time suspended. She continued during an alarming interval in her first swoon, and only opened her eyes to relapse into another. I summoned Montecatino; he pronounced the heart to be unsound—perhaps broken! She rallied at length, and was sensible; but it was only to sob. At midnight she was left to the care of her old nurse. Looking out of a casement which commanded the court, I observed the excessive beauty of the night: below was a flood of light, above were its unnumbered sources. I was suddenly startled, for at that moment a tremendous knocking at the gates shook the building; the porter rushed into the court, advanced, retreated, and stood still by turns, as if doubting how to act. I commanded him from the window where I was to await my descent before he unbarred the gate. I joined him in the court, and ordered him to be in readiness to open the portal the instant the knocking was repeated. On such occasions as these Orazio was all passion, and I apparently all calmness. I almost hoped by delay to increase his fury and my own tranquillity. In a moment the gate was nearly shattered by the fierce energy of Orazio's arm: it opened, he dashed into the court.

"Restore my wife to me!" he exclaimed; saying which he rushed at me with a naked stiletto, and, piercing my cloak, lost his hold of the weapon, which had become entangled in the folds of my garment. He drew another from his side and aimed a blow at my heart. I turned away, and, with the instrument which he had first used, struck him with fiendlike deliberation at the moment that he staggered past me, uttering the name of Moro as he dropped.

At this same moment Angela flew into the court, and received her husband in her arms. She held him a short time, kissed his forehead, and fell with him to the ground. She rose to gaze at his face; she laughed and screamed. She tried to arouse him. He was dead—perfectly dead. She dropped on the corpse and was insensible once more.

When I saw fully the situation to which I was reduced I groaned inwardly after a deep and long inspiration. No excitement was otherwise mingled in the horrors of that hour. A supernatural stillness hung over my spirit, such as the souls of exiles experience as they wander the margin of the flood, and remember their sins of old. I felt too familiar with my crime; it seemed to have been committed long before, and the spectacle at my feet appeared only monumental. How was this? Accustomed to view all things as predestined, instead of contemplating the present deed, my mind was with Him who before the world was made had ordained all things to be. My spirit was in the dawn of destiny, it hovered upon a period of history which was unwritten, and which the rational tradition of things increate had mysteriously handed down from dateless epochs; periods of anarchy antecedent to the hour when the face of the waters was first ruffled.

If I felt awe it was soothed by these false but sublime associations, for

in comparison with my deed the heavens themselves seemed new. These privileged emotions passed away; of a sudden I was seized by the hand of Time, and whirled into the present. My sister had moved, and looked me in the face, and I was human again.

And then when I beheld the corpse I saw no vices left; but the virtues of my friend seemed still to survive. Forgetful that I had acted only in self-defence—greatly as imagination might exaggerate my position—I hated myself worse than I could have hated a foe, and yet I inclined not to take vengeance on myself. I was conscious that had I perished by my own hand, the mighty universe would have survived my insignificant fall, and in its unchanging aspect been a commentary on my obscure ambition.

Other thoughts led me forth by degrees from the prison of my soul. I looked on high, and beheld the fair moon over the quadrangle of my palace, dressing with a dim beauty the busts of my forefathers; and hundreds of stars drew my attention to the upper regions of the blue abysm. I saw glory in the heavens; I approached timidly, and they resisted not; I mingled my aspiring genius with the tranquil majesty of the universe. It was a great moment in my existence: my moral courage increased, and I drew in with my breath a deep draught of the grandeur of nature. I then was able to look placidly down on the lifeless form, and to gaze until the earth on which my victim lay seemed to glow as an altar. "It is finished," I thought; "the sacrifice is made." Smiling almost over the mysterious victory which the spirit of Moro had thus gained, I looked up at heaven again as I had done when he swore me to this deed; and on that night, in the presence of myriads of worlds, the authors and harbingers of fate, the triumph of tragedy seemed confirmed.

Chapter III.

An investigation into the circumstances of Orazio's death was formally entered on by the civic authorities. The evidence of my domestics, however, speedily set the inquiry at rest and ended in my favour. But I was ordered to retire a prisoner to my castle as soon as the funeral was over; for the first year of Alessandro's reign was marked by acts of justice.

My sister was lost to me. She could neither weep nor speak, and her eye was fixed ere it met its object. She knew the worst the moment that she looked on her sea of trouble; she stood not therefore on its shore to regard its vastness, or to draw hope from its illusive horizon, but plunged at once into its depths to rise no more.

She had been sick for many months, and despair had hastened her towards the grave. I felt responsible for these melancholy consequences, but I bore my trial, which was a heavy one, with as much submission as the excitement under which I laboured would allow. I sat by her, watched her, ministered to her, but she scarcely observed me. Her eyes moved vacantly over all objects alike.

Three days after her husband's death, on entering her apartment I found her on her knees before a crucifix, holding the portrait of Orazio in her embrace, her head resting on the little altar at which she knelt. I called

on her by name, I placed my arm around her, and raising her from her position drew her gently to my breast. She was almost cold; the chill of death entered me; I uttered an involuntary shriek, and dropped the beloved body from my arms. It fell heavily, and the miniature was shivered to atoms. Her attendant had sat in the room unwilling to interrupt her devotions, unconscious of her end.

Her chamber had thus become a sepulchre, her body resting in the attitude of prayer for her departed soul!

On the sixth day the chapel in the parish church at Aula, which was about one mile from the castle, was lined throughout with black, and the windows were blinded with crape, while to displace the darkness many hundred lights burned in the place of mourning. A baronial coronet was fixed in the centre of the ceiling, and waving folds of ermine gracefully descended from it to each corner of the chapel. Beneath the coronet a chaste cenotaph was erected, and on it rested the coffins of the dead. All the nobility of the neighbourhood were invited to attend the funeral, and numbers of both sexes crowded to witness the performance of high mass on the occasion. I took my place apart from the rest, and hid my spirit in mourning. The great altar, whose candlesticks were of solid gold, was profusely illuminated; and the ceremony of high mass commenced in religious pride. The organ pealed forth in mechanical grandeur its imitation of human woe, the voices of chanters mingled with it a penetrating harmony. One particular voice rose higher and sweeter, and seemed to thrill rapturously through the angelic attitudes which lived in the frescoes above.

It is the custom for none to be admitted to these funereal ceremonies who are not attired in mourning, with the exception of those who are about to quit the world for a monastic life. Among the assembly I observed a female clad in white, and decked out in jewels and flowers, while a sad expression of countenance contrasted with those gay habiliments. The virgin was about to take the veil, and thus, for the last time in life, she was to appear among men in the pleasing garb of fashion. As I gazed I wondered at such resignation. Her mind, thought I, is better fortified than mine; she rejects instead of hourly cultivating the little ambition which meets encouragement in this world. She adopts, instead, the hopeless reality of a cell, and patiently awaits her future reward!

My encounter with this lovely young woman at the chapel was one of the most extraordinary events of my life. I had only to look at her face for a moment to discover her perfect resemblance to the charmer of my vision in the robbers' cave. Having once seen the pure reality of all that the most vivid dream could reveal of female beauty, my eyes were fixed on the apparition; my sight grew unsteady in the midst of so much ravishment, and floated in the voluptuous image which was no longer only there, but was all-present as in a world of rapture. And was she to be hidden hereafter from all but the Maker's eye, who might watch over her in the midst of millions as easily as if she were at His right hand? How selfish must be the hearts of those who would devote such loveliness to the desert of religion, to the convent, from whose home enthusiasm was expelled by the shadow of the tomb; as if it were a dwelling-place in the past, and willed by the dead to be for ever theirs! Would the inmates of an arid convent have more sympathy for her than the living? Her

eyes were too mild to have clung to forbidden gladness—her meek expression declared her the victim of the selfish pious—an orphan whom none would rescue.

All other consciousness than that of her presence had vanished from within me. Meantime the service had gone on; its most touching portions had elevated my soul into loftier conceptions of love, not divine but human—the love of virtue, and of her who was its incarnation. The bishop had begun his sermon in reprobating domestic quarrels, and had alluded to the fate of Orazio and Angela. All, save myself, were in tears. I heard not his words. The novice wept as her image had done in my sleep, and once more she resembled a moral saviour in whose veins the blood of the Redeemer flowed, but whose example none could pursue

At length her eyes moved upwards, she directed her looks to the coronet, perhaps to heaven; she dropped them, and they fell in full-orbed vision on me. I started involuntarily and changed countenance; she observed my confusion, and withdrew her gaze, which sank into its wonted supineness; nor was I able, by the most fervid and penetrating expression of love, to recover her glances to me.

I found afterwards on inquiry, that Theonoe had brought the novice with her to the chapel, and that her name was Abarbanel. The reality of her apparition did not lessen the likeness she bore to Ippolito; and as I looked at her, the saying of Angus, that he was a little girl, again came to my remembrance, and more than once, I doubted whether it was not he, in the dress and sex of womanhood, who had appeared in the chapel. My regard for the innocence of Ippolito led me to forbid his presence at the funeral; therefore, not seeing him and the novice together, I was unable at the time to resolve my doubts. But by questioning him about the mass, I was assured that he had not been present, and never having known him to deviate from the strictest truth, believed him. Mindful that Angus had pronounced the real name of Ippolito to be Adora, we called the novice by that name whenever we made her the subject of allusion.

Towards the conclusion of the sermon, I looked around, and saw the monumental figure of my mother. Her marble eye represented the absence of vision, but her benignant smile was saved, and seemed to pause upon the cenotaph before her. Then the crape-lined walls, the burning candles, were restored to my long-abstracted view; on my ear fell the last words of the preacher. Finally, a noise, like the roaring of a distant wave, announced to me that the congregation was rising, and ready to mingle again in worldly scenes.

I returned to Florence, and thus was ended my six days' labour; and I retired from the world into the depths of my own misery, in the vain hope of rest on the seventh, which was the Sabbath-day.

It may appear that this free confession contains inconsistencies of principle and action not easily reconcilable in one man. Often have I thought so too; when, in the same hour, feelings the most humane have been succeeded in me by the wish to end the world by fire, and to involve myself and my species in one common ruin. But the type of this is found in nature; birth is cotemporary with death; growth with decay, in one and the same being. The volcanic region is often the scene of the avalanche; and both, while necessary parts of the world's system, are

apparently inimical to the safety of living things. Winter and summer, night and day, appear equally inconsistent at first view; but between all these diversities, there subsists an intrinsic harmony. The intermediate links which connect them are more or less hidden from the view; but all spring alike from a central government whose effective laws constitute his tyrannous republic of creation. The soul which blasphemes feels not a virtue in its words, but rather a bewildered lamentation of the circumstances which keep piety afar; the heart which is cruel takes but revenge on the fate which placed it thus remote from pity. Evil and good even are members of the same family, as are ugliness and beauty; the one but an irregular manifestation of the other. So are all the works of God, both in their integrity and disorder, reconcilable with wisdom divine; especially since a saving remedy against evil is at the command of all.

For many days after the funeral, I remained in my study, absorbed in active meditation. The time passed rapidly; but my thoughts kept pace with it in its flight. When the twilight of each evening fell, my mind cast on it a maddening glare, and I paused exhausted, as if to rest and contemplate the race which I had run with the hours. In proportion as my strength vanished, my ideas became more vivid, my words more fluent.

The night did not put a period to my labours; I still went on indulging in the pleasing madness of fancy. I depicted my late trials scene by scene, and the events appeared before me with as much force as if again represented in the theatre of the world. The senses were my chief prompters; they opened the memory of recent disaster, and its circle of passions revolved after it again. Night after night, I persisted in these sad delights, until at length I sank back on the couch in a state of insensibility.

I know not how I reached my bed, but when consciousness was restored, I found myself groping on the brink of frenzy, my eyes wandering about my room in search of Giuditta, whose look I now feared to meet. My presence of mind, however, did not entirely forsake me in that hour, for, although I muttered occasionally an unmeaning sentence, I knew it the moment after; as if unable to listen to my words, I could read my recollection of them. Then would I busy myself in trying to extinguish the wild thought, and to strangle the monsters of fancy. After the lapse of several days I slept, and dreamed that I was buried with Orazio and Angela. The dream was tranquil; I awoke refreshed, and from that time began to recover from the low fever which had prostrated me. But I remained weak in mind and body, and felt everything so acutely that I could not, without pain, even have plucked a flower from its stem.

And still, with all this unhealthy sensibility, a feeling of apathy was coexistent. At times, I felt as if I had received a friendly visit from Death, who had appeared in a fascinating shape to invite me to his still domain. Such was my feebleness, I had neither inclination to accept nor to decline his sad but pleasing offer of an untroubled asylum. I could not think, I dared not feel; my hopes were scattered by the autumn which had prematurely visited my soul, and they lay around me like withered leaves, which a spark of emotion must have totally consumed. Tears unbidden traced their way down my cheek, as from time to time I

thought over by-gone days, and on affections lost; on misdirected ambition; and the sacrifice of that hourly joy which was originally entailed on being.

And as I thus sadly and penitently mused, my eyes lived upon the floating image of Adora Abarbanel. Suddenly, while I thought of all, in the presence of that heavenly messenger, that being who proved to be the most favoured of all human, a belief came over me that Giuditta's function had for the present ended; that she whom I had injured had to suffer no longer at contemplating my deeds; and the same instant, a sound from the Campanile loomed heavily upon my heart.

It was the summons of the Misericordia! I felt, while the call yet startled me, that I owed all my devotion to that glorious Giuditta. Would that I had obeyed it, as was my duty! How it would have lightened the burden of her soul at that bitter hour had I gone to her, and returned goodly offices; to her, the most pure of women, who, from the practice of too much virtue, had been deserted by all in the hour of need.

Chapter IV.

The time had come when I was to put off the tragic mask of Moro, that portraiture of human wickedness, and assume that which is prefigured in the Vera Icon, miraculously transferred in drops of sweat from the Redeemer's visage; the dewdrops of His thorny crown, effused under harshest experience of sin bruising a divine spirit.

My deed of sin, perpetrated while yet the tragic mask was upon my brow, brought me into the presence of Adora. Thus was there a spot in the valley of deep shades, a Camaldoli in leafy Vallombrosa, whence it was my lot to perceive a glimmer of heaven afar off—to see through the lurid shadows of fire a cool white light above! I had attained to the sight through blood malevolently spilt, and was to pass to it through a fiery ordeal, the sole road to the possession of her on whose white raiment was the image, and in whose veins flowed the blood of a Redeemer.

She was of the holy family, a race selected in an age of faith to exhibit great examples to mankind. She was another St. Veronica, and was born to impress upon my soul an unfading spectre of the Ecce Homo, which she bore as on a radiant banner. But woe to him who achieves salvation through the like ordeal. And let none deem that where the career of guilt pauses, the confines of heaven come in view. Midway extends a gulf, not for torment, but expiation.

The fatal calm, as if my first love were no longer an element in my destiny, still held me. It led me to disregard the commands of Alessandro, the newly-installed doge (for Florence was subdued under the Medici), to retire a prisoner to my castle. I cared not what might happen. Thanatos, who had crept back into my service during my illness, warned me, but I dismissed him with coldness; too indifferent to discharge him finally from his office, though the admonitions of Angus rang more loudly than ever in my ears. But I was no longer blind to the character of the man, though I forbore to accuse him of perfidy and

crime. His interview with the robber-chief in Calabria, his presence in the caverns, his earnest conversations with Orazio at the Villa Savatelli —yet more recently, his appearance at Volterra, in the hostile camp— discovered to me his guilt; while his pretensions to literature, his assumed contempt for women, made him despicable to me: yet I retained him in my service, feeling that his time would come.

But what gave me greater uneasiness was my growing unpopularity. The late events had become more and more a subject of conversation in the world. No one understood my motives, or could penetrate into their origin; for, to know me truly, implied a knowledge of relations existing between the Creator and created, but which yet remains unrevealed. All things conspired, therefore, to make it expedient that I should retire to my country dwelling; but I made no attempt to do so; and when the order of the government was repeated in a more peremptory tone, I could only entreat the messenger to convey the necessary orders to my servants, —an act which he performed. Then I travelled over the old country in a state too apathetic to regard the well-loved scenes; yet a sense of liberty, though I was not free, possessed me. The recollection of the young novice was constantly in my thoughts; her heavenly face was ever before my eyes. Milissa's image had in some degree departed; her fascinations were limited to recollection—removed from my feelings to my memory; while Adora, she in whom I saw sublimest virtue, which to behold is to love, was fully established in her stead, and called into being a less passionate and more holy sentiment.

When my carriage reached the spot where the roads divided—one towards my castle, the other in the direction of the villa of Savatelli, at which Adora was then staying—my course hesitated a moment; but ere long I ordered the driver to take the latter road: I had determined to see Adora. On a sudden my energy returned in its wonted strength—an energy which was to overcome many obstacles, and whose impulse, though it might be arrested, could never be destroyed.

As I came in sight of the villa of Savatelli, a spy—he who came as a messenger from the government to me at Florence—presented himself, and demanded a few words of private conversation. Then he briefly intimated that I must accompany him to the fortress of Volterra. Having read his warrant, I surrendered myself into his hands.

I entered a vehicle which presently drove up, and my new acquaintance took his seat outside; but to my surprise a corner of the carriage was occupied by another, a ruffianly-looking fellow, whose exterior was like a column in an armory, he bristled so with weapons. I did not perceive him till I was seated, and the door had closed; and before I could demand his business there, the horses were in rapid motion. I turned to him in silence; his face was muffled; but I kept my eyes on him, while with my left hand I touched my dagger.

"It is useless to resist," said the ruffian, in a whisper—a truth I had already perceived.

I had heard and read much of the feelings of men under solitary confinement, and was not altogether sorry of an opportunity to experience them in my own case. I soon arrived at the prison-gate, and, having alighted, entered it. I traversed a court, and crossed a drawbridge leading to the tower of the fortress, which we entered through a doorway

sunk in the deep stone walls. We then descended a few steps into a cell, furnished with a seat and a bed of straw. There I was left by the armed man. As he took leave, I desired him not to desert me, and gave him gold, which he eagerly clutched; a circumstance not to be construed otherwise than as favourable. I had never felt the power of the law until I heard the lock turn on my dungeon-door! At the heart-appalling click, I felt separated from the universe—in some degree, from God. I breathed with difficulty. I pressed the palms of my hands against the rough and damp walls, as if to move them from between me and the day, but only to know that I was indeed in bonds. My first emotion was one of lofty anguish, which expressed itself in moans. I sobbed, but with no disposition to shed tears. I shook my limbs with impatience, clasped my hands, and looked upwards into the darkness. I beat my head, but with tenderness; I seized my hair, but with the gentleness of one who had no friend save himself. I sank into my seat; I threw myself on the straw, but rose again immediately. There was no rest for me! I tried to climb to an aperture in the wall, through which a ray of moonlight passed; but the cold chill which struck through me, and the slipping of my foot as I tried to fix it, deterred me. I went to the door and examined the lock; but all my exertions were fruitless: I was a prisoner; the law was stronger than I!

When I had re-collected my senses, I experienced sensations which I had never before known. It seemed to me as if the future were cut off. I could not even look forward to the next moment. Time had become to me a stagnant pool; its onward wave stood still.

When I was first arrested, I suppressed my sentiments of defiance until I should be alone, when I anticipated a fearful outbreak; but instead of this happening, they had passed off completely, and I could have embraced my foes. Again I laid down on the straw, drew my cloak over my head, and invited slumber, feeling as if I might have sunk into total apathy for the remainder of my existence. I thought hurriedly over the past, which had taken the same aspect as the future had so recently assumed; no event attracted; none appeared momentous, or even interesting to me. The loss of liberty was the loss of all concern for what had been, or had yet to be.

Marvellous were the visions of that night. In a city like Volterra, raised upon Etruscan foundations, and irrigated by the current of my affections, as far as the spirit passes over the ideal forms of what it loves. I naturally dreamt of the things and times of old. First, I saw an Etruscan sarcophagus, on which were sculptured the arch of Hercules, and a funeral procession moving through it. I then beheld various sculptures, mutilated and scattered about the floor. I seemed buried in the ruins of antique art. I stretched my arms forth, as in wonder, when an old man appeared, holding an intense light, and pointing to a chain which was made fast to a staple in the wall, and then towards the floor, in which there were hollows, worn by the feet of some wretched captive.

"I am the Genius of thy house," said the old man, "and an elder of the Etruscan race. I will show thee within this hour things such as you can never again behold."

I arose and followed him. With a key which he drew from his bosom, he opened the door, and led the way up a narrow staircase. As my foot

reached the first step, I met my mother: she shook her head mildly, and disappeared behind me. A second time I was attempting to ascend the steps, when I heheld my father: he set his eyes on me coldly, and vanished. A third time I essayed to mount, when Melissa hurried alarmedly by me, her brother at her heels, hobbling after her on splendid crutches. I paused for breath, and once more began to advance, when Giuditta, winged as an angel, passed me. I then heard the voice of the Genius from above reproving my delay, and was about to obey his call, when the procession of souls, each bearing a torch, repassed in the order in which they had first appeared, but in more rapid succession, and vanished out of sight. And now ensued a scene which no words can depict. With the rapidity of a waterfall the figures rushed down, and vanishing below, instantly reappeared above, whence again they descended, chased by hell-hounds, which leaped the flight of stairs like cataracts, and howled as from terror, while the slamming of doors shook the tower to its foundation. I sank to the ground exhausted, and continued for some moments, with my head reposing on my hand and my back turned on the infernal scene, the noises of which, lost gradually in the distance, became hushed. When I looked up, the Genius was no longer on the narrow flight, but—as if Palladio had raised his wand—stood at the top of a staircase, which was broad and of great architectural beauty, and had on each side of every step a large alabaster figure.

"Thou hast lost thy way according to thy wont," said my venerable guide; "ascend without further loss of time, for the night changes."

I did as he commanded, and no sooner arose than I seemed wafted upward without an effort. A corridor opened on a platform outside the tower, where I found myself with the Genius, and in the distance I saw Ariosto and Michael Angelo in earnest conversation. Such a night as then shone no mortal ever gazed upon: all the luminaries above burned in large distinctness, and the blue sky appeared thrown over them as a precious robe. Below, on all sides, nature slumbered as in refreshing sleep, and seemed entranced in a dream of glorious resurrection from the past revolutions of this globe.

"And now," said the Genius, "I will display before thee, in the forms of reality, what the Alleghieri, Buonarotti, and Raffaelli have only conceived of art. I will show thee the cartoons and models which were designed by immortal natures before the world was created, and from which its scenery was executed."

As he thus spoke, his language lifted up my heart, and I felt as if gigantic in stature. I looked, and saw a work of colossal proportions, which, from the perfect intermixture of light and shadow, had the appearance of a solid model. It was the snow-sown wilderness, on which no man reaps: the destitute earth, whose inhabitants are the quivering ice-crags and rushing waters. This picture disappeared, and I beheld, as at its base, Etruria, Appennine-cinctured, with her feet in the ocean. Her breasts were cities, palace-gemmed; her mantle, the waving corn-fields and pendant vine; her shield, the dark-grey olive-grove.

This also passed away, and figures, single and in groups, stood before me, the divine originals of those serene statues of ancient Hellas which from time past have delighted the chaste vision of man!

"All I have looked upon," said I, "is grand and beautiful; it is

emblematic of gladness; but fit only to please the perfect and the immortal."

"After those ancient models," replied the Genius, "the perfect and the immortal were created, for such were man and nature originally: but things are now so changed, that it is difficult for the artist to conceive, or the poet to enjoy, their lost beauty. The one must labour through the process of refining nature, and seize the exemplars as they return to the inward vision of reason which could not decay; the other must spend all his years in restoring to his faculties their primitive balance. Great were the labours of Hercules, but those of the Ideal are far greater."

I sank at the feet of the Genius, and embraced his knees, exclaiming, "Blessed art thou who dost thus feast my reason with the teachings of truth."

The Genius smiled, and said, "Follow, and I will bring thee to the labours of a rival school, whose art thou hast had the boldness to enter on."

Again we stood in the corridor, when presently the great staircase gaped at its centre, and the alabaster images stood at double their former distances from each other, and glowed as if illumined.

"Now comes the trial of thy courage," said the Genius; "look over the edge of the corridor, and tell me if thou art so hardy as to face the element which rages beneath us?"

I advanced, and gazed on an ocean of fire, extensive as that which is outspread before the eye of him who stands on the Tuscan shore. The waves were boisterous, as if pregnant with storms contending together for birth, and the heritage of tyranny over nature's calm; and as deep a hue tinged those waves, as is seen when the sun sets in summer like a ball of ruby behind the waters. My temples were scorched as I looked upon the billows. I hastily receded, and cried out, "Good Genius, my path has been heretofore perilous; urge me not on to inevitable destruction."

"Thy fears are natural," he answered; "but if thou confidest in me, the vessel of thy fate will be piloted in the way thou hast to go."

He spoke in the manner of one who had already passed through the ordeal which I knew to be awaiting me. I placed myself in his hands. We descended into a boat, against whose sides the red waves whitened into foam. We seemed to be voyaging for many nights and days. My companion was silent, and, as I sat beside him, no other idea occupied my mind than that of motion upon a charmed sea. At last we reached the shore of a barren and rocky country, and, gliding among its cliffs, landed upon the silent beach. Standing there, the Genius waved his arm, and the flood went back, when there began to emerge from the sands beautiful remains, as of a ruined city—the reliques of palaces, halls, and temples. I looked round. My eyes were attracted by figures sculptured in whitest marble. The Genius, seeing me dwell on them in admiration, said,

"Palaces may be ruined, halls deserted, temples destroyed; but the works of genius for ever remain. Man may neglect or know them not; but God, as now thou beholdest, is the preserver of all that is worthy to be saved."

Gazing in mute wonder still, I drew nearer, and walked through its streets. Its bold architecture excited within me the most stirring emotions. My eyes flashed upon its noble pediments and columns; and

instead of reflecting with pain on the vanity of the dead who had dwelt there in grandeur, I took account only of their glory, which assumed a solemn and holy aspect in my mind. When I came to examine the marble statues, I discovered each work to express some dominant passion. Here, Laocoons plunged and writhed in the folds of serpents; there, in the midst of petrified beholders, stood Medusa, bristling with Terrors. There, the Gladiator, sinking upon the ground, took his final leave of earth, but spent eternity in expiring. And there the Saint escaped despair, and prayed, and with looks of penitence occupied all time; for though the artist can seize but the feeling of the moment, he makes it last for ever.

Discerning nothing that represented the phases of the soul in repose, I turned to the Genius, and begged him to point out such. He made answer,

"There are none such in this city; them you beheld on the other side of this flood—beheld, but regarded them slightly. Here dwelt the self-accursed: here had their abiding place the impassioned whose ends were attainable only through suffering."

"What was the end they sought?" I asked.

"Their end was repose, but under conditions not possible to man—a repose which, seeking through excitement, they only attained unto in death. Know that highest art, reaching at the Divine attributes, represents the passionless, the forms in which concentre harmoniously the energies of human soul in perfect peace. A word more," continued the Genius, "before we part. Apply what thou hast seen. Hitherto hast thou lived in the joyous Valdarno; there hast thou pursued the first portion of thy career, self-led into many troubles. The vale of life is changing for thee into the valley of the shades, where the buzz of insect is heard which carries with it the sting of sin. Nor will thy sorrows end there; for when most thou hast need of peace, instead of finding the elysium of thy dreamy hopes, thou wilt be disquieted by a picture of the dark side of thy heart. Such is the portion of those who follow, however far off, the ancient Saviour, that awful Master of old. But fear not for thyself, brave youth, thou whose glory it may be to redeem thy race. I will not forsake thee. When thou hast seen thyself in all the darkness of human nature, the wings of the avenger shall be collapsed, and thou wilt emerge from their shadow into the crystal light of thy apotheosis, to suffer no more. In me behold Atresthe!"

THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES;

A Romance of Pendle Forest.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER IV.

ALICE NUTTER.

THE quarrel between Nicholas Assheton and Sir Thomas Metcalfe had already been made known to Sir Ralph by the officious Master Potts, and though it occasioned the knight much displeasure, as interfering with the amicable arrangement he hoped to effect with Sir Thomas for his relatives the Robinsons, still he felt sure that he had sufficient influence with his hot-headed cousin, the squire, to prevent the dispute from being carried further, and he only waited the conclusion of the sports on the green to take him to task. What was the knight's surprise and annoyance, therefore, to find that a new brawl had sprung up, and ignorant of its precise cause, he laid it entirely at the door of the turbulent Nicholas. Indeed, on the commencement of the fray he imagined that the squire was personally concerned in it, and, full of wrath, flew to the scene of action; but before he got there, the affair, which, as has been seen, was of short duration, was fully settled, and he only heard the jeers addressed to the retreating combatant by Nicholas. It was not Sir Ralph's way to vent his choler in words, but the squire knew in an instant, from the expression of his countenance, that he was greatly incensed, and therefore hastened to explain.

"What means this unseemly disturbance, Nicholas?" cried Sir Ralph, not allowing the other to speak. "You are ever brawling like an Alsatian squire. Independently of the ill example set to these good folk, who have met here for tranquil amusement, you have counteracted all my plans for the adjustment of the differences between Sir Thomas Metcalfe and our aunt, of Raydale. If you forget what is due to yourself, sir, do not forget what is due to me, and to the name you bear."

"No one but yourself should say as much to me, Sir Ralph," rejoined Nicholas, somewhat haughtily, "but you are under a misapprehension. It is not I who have been fighting, though I should have acted in precisely the same manner as our cousin Dick, if I had received the same affront, and so I make bold to say would you. Our name shall suffer no discredit from me; and as a gentleman, I assert, that Sir Thomas Metcalfe has only received due chastisement, as you yourself will admit, cousin, when you know all."

"I know him to be overbearing," observed Sir Ralph.

"Overbearing is not the word, cousin," interrupted Nicholas; "he is

as proud as a peacock, and would trample upon us all, and gore us, too, like one of the wild bulls of Bowland, if we would let him have his way. But I would treat him as I would the bull aforesaid, a wild boar, or any other savage and intractable beast, hunt him down, and poll his horns, or pluck out his tusks."

"Come, come, Nicholas, this is no very gentle language," remarked Sir Ralph.

"Why, to speak truth, cousin, I do not feel in any very gentle frame of mind," rejoined the squire; "my ire has been roused by this insolent braggart, my blood is up, and I long to be doing."

"Unchristian feelings, Nicholas," said Sir Ralph, severely, "and should be overcome. Turn the other cheek to the smiter. I trust you bear no malice to Sir Thomas."

"I bear him no malice, for I hope malice is not in my nature, cousin," replied Nicholas, "but I owe him a grudge, and when a fitting opportunity occurs——"

"No more of this, unless you would really incur my displeasure," rejoined Sir Ralph; "the matter has gone far enough, too far, perhaps, for amendment, and if you know it not, I can tell you that Sir Thomas's claims to Raydale will be difficult to dispute, and so our uncle Robinson has found since he hath taken counsel on the case."

"Have a care, Sir Ralph," said Nicholas, noticing that Master Potts was approaching them, with his ears evidently wide open, "there is that little London lawyer hovering about. But I'll give the cunning fox a double. I'm glad to hear you say so, Sir Ralph," he added, in a tone calculated to reach Potts, "and since our uncle Robinson is so sure of his cause, it may be better to let this blustering knight be. Perchance, it is the certainty of failure that makes him so insensate."

"This is meant to blind me, but it shall not serve your turn, cautelous squire," muttered Potts; "I caught enough of what fell just now from Sir Ralph to satisfy me that he hath strong misgivings. But it is best not to appear too secure.—Ah, Sir Ralph," he added, coming forward, "I was right, you see, in my caution. I am a man of peace, and strive to prevent quarrels and bloodshed. Quarrel if you please—and unfortunately men are prone to anger—but always settle your disputes in a court of law; always in a court of law, Sir Ralph. That is the only arena where a sensible man should ever fight. Take good advice, fee your counsel well, and the chances are ten to one in your favour. That is what I say to my worthy and singular good client, Sir Thomas; but he is somewhat headstrong and vehement, and will not listen to me. He is for settling matters by the sword, for making forcible entries and detainers, and ousting the tenants in possession, whereby he would render himself liable to arrest, fine, ransom, and forfeiture, instead of proceeding cautiously and decorously as the law directs, and as I advise, Sir Ralph, by writ of *ejectione firmæ* or action of trespass, the which would assuredly establish his title, and restore him the house and lands. Or he may proceed by writ of right, which, perhaps, in his case, considering the long absence of possession, and the doubts supposed to perplex the title—though I myself have no doubts about it—would be the most efficacious. These are your only true weapons, Sir Ralph,—your writs of entry, assize, and right,—your pleas of novel disseisin, post-disseisin, and re-disseisin,—your remitters, your præcipes, your pones, and your recordari faciases. These are the sword, shield, and armour of proof of a wise man."

"Zounds! you take away one's breath with this hailstorm of writs and pleas, master lawyer!" cried Nicholas. "But in one respect I am of your 'worthy and singular good' client's opinion, and would rather trust to my own hand for the defence of my property than to the law to keep it for me."

"Then you would do wrong, good Master Nicholas," rejoined Potts, with a smile of supreme contempt; "for the law is the better guardian and the stronger adversary of the two; and so Sir Thomas will find if he takes my advice, and obtains, as he can and will do, a perfect title *juris et seisinæ conjunctionem.*"

"Sir Thomas is still willing to refer the case to my arbitrement, I believe, sir?" demanded Sir Ralph, uneasily.

"He was so, Sir Ralph," rejoined Potts, "unless the assaults and batteries, with intent to do him grievous corporal hurt, which he hath sustained from your relatives, have induced a change of mind in him. But as I premised, Sir Ralph, I am a man of peace, and willing to intermediate."

"Provided you get your fee, master lawyer," observed Nicholas, sarcastically.

"Certainly, I object not to the *quiddam honorarium*, Master Nicholas," rejoined Potts; "and if my client hath the *quid pro quo*, and gaineth his point, he cannot complain.—But what is this? Some fresh disturbance!"

"Something hath happened to the May Queen," cried Nicholas.

"I trust not," said Sir Ralph, with real concern. "Ha! she has fainted. They are bringing her this way. Poor maid! what can have occasioned this sudden seizure?"

"I think I could give a guess," muttered Nicholas. "Better remove her to the Abbey," he added aloud to the knight.

"You are right," said Sir Ralph. "Our cousin Dick is near her, I observe. He shall see her conveyed there at once."

At this moment Lady Assheton, and Mistress Nutter, with some of the other ladies, came up.

"Just in time, Nell," cried the knight. "Have you your smelling-bottle about you? The May Queen has fainted."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Assheton, springing towards Alizon, who was now sustained by young Richard Assheton; the forester having surrendered her to him. "How has this happened?" she inquired, giving her to breathe at a small phial.

"That I cannot tell you, cousin," replied Richard Assheton, "unless from some sudden fright."

"That was it, Master Richard," cried Robin Hood; "she cried out on hearing the clashing of swords, just now, and, I think, pronounced your name, on finding you engaged with Sir Thomas, and immediately after turned pale, and would have fallen if I had not caught her."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed Lady Assheton, glancing at Richard, whose eyes fell before her inquiring gaze. "But see, she revives," pursued the lady. "Let me support her head."

As she spoke, Alizon opened her eyes, and perceiving Richard Assheton, who had relinquished her to his relative, standing beside her, she exclaimed, "Oh! you are safe! I feared——" And then she stopped, greatly embarrassed.

"You feared he might be in danger from his fierce adversary," supplied Lady Assheton; "but no. The conflict is happily over, and he is unhurt."

"I am glad of it," said Alizon, earnestly.

"She had better be taken to the Abbey," remarked Sir Ralph, coming up.

"Nay, she will be more at ease at home," observed Lady Assheton, with a significant look, which, however, failed in reaching her husband.

"Yes, truly shall I, gracious lady," replied Alizon, "far more so. I have given you trouble enough already."

"No trouble at all," said Sir Ralph, kindly; "her ladyship is too happy to be of service in a case like this. Are you not, Nell? The faintness will pass off presently. But let her go to the Abbey at once, and remain there till the evening festivities, in which she takes part, commence. Give her your arm, Dick."

Sir Ralph's word was law, and therefore Lady Assheton made no remonstrance. But she said, quickly,

"I will take care of her myself."

"I require no assistance, madam," replied Alizon, "since Sir Ralph will have me go. Nay, you are too kind, too condescending," she added, reluctantly taking Lady Assheton's proffered arm.

And in this way they proceeded slowly towards the Abbey, escorted by Richard Assheton, and attended by Mistress Braddyll and some others of the ladies.

Amongst those who had watched the progress of the May Queen's restoration with most interest was Mistress Nutter, though she had not interfered; and as Alizon departed with Lady Assheton, she observed to Nicholas, who was standing near,

"Can this be the daughter of Elizabeth Device, and granddaughter of——"

"Your old Pendle witch, Mother Demdike," supplied Nicholas; "the very same, I assure you, Mistress Nutter."

"She is wholly unlike the family," observed the lady; "and her features resemble some I have seen before."

"She does not resemble her mother, undoubtedly," replied Nicholas, "though what her granddame may have been some sixty years ago, when she was Alizon's age, it would be difficult to say. She is no beauty now."

"Those finely modelled features, that graceful figure, and those delicate hands, cannot surely belong to one lowly born and bred?" said Mistress Nutter.

"They differ from the ordinary peasant mould, truly," replied Nicholas. "If you ask me for the lineage of a steed, I can give a guess at it on sight of the animal, but as regards our own race, I'm at fault, Mistress Nutter."

"I must question Elizabeth Device about her," observed Alice. "Strange, I should never have seen her before, though I know the family so well."

"I wish you did not know Mother Demdike quite so well, Mistress Nutter," remarked Nicholas—"a mischievous and malignant old witch, who deserves the tar-barrel. The only marvel is, that she has not been burned long ago. I am of opinion, with many others, that it was she who bewitched your poor husband, Richard Nutter."

"I do not think it," replied Mistress Nutter, with a mournful shake of the head. "Alas, poor man! he died from hard riding, after hard drinking. That was the only witchcraft in his case. Be warned by his fate yourself, Nicholas."

"Hard riding after drinking was more likely to sober him than to kill him," rejoined the squire. "But, as I said just now, I like not this Mother Demdike, nor her rival in iniquity, old Mother Chattox. The devil only knows which of the two is worst. But if the former hag did not bewitch your husband to death, as I shrewdly suspect, it is certain that the latter mumbling old miscreant killed my elder brother, Richard, by her sorceries."

"Mother Chattox did you a good turn then, Nicholas," observed Mistress Nutter, "in making you master of the fair estates of Downham."

"So far, perhaps, she might," rejoined Nicholas, "but I do not like the manner of it, and would gladly see her burned; nay, I would fire the fagots myself."

"You are as superstitious as the rest, Nicholas," said Mistress Nutter. "For my part, I do not believe in the existence of witches."

"Not believe in witches, with these two living proofs to the contrary?" cried Nicholas, in amazement. "Why, Pendle Forest swarms with witches. They burrow in the hill-side like rabbits in a warren. They are the terror of the whole country. No man's cattle, goods, nor even life, are safe from them, and the only reason why these two old hags, who hold sovereign sway over the others, have 'scaped justice so long, is because every one is afraid to go near them. Their solitary habitations are more strongly guarded than fortresses. Not believe in witches! Why, I should as soon misdoubt the Holy Scriptures."

"It may be because I reside near them that I have so little apprehension, or rather no apprehension at all," replied Mistress Nutter; "but to me, Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox appear two harmless old women."

"They're a couple of dangerous and damnable old hags, and deserve the stake," cried Nicholas, emphatically.

All this discourse had been swallowed with greedy ears by the ever-vigilant Master Potts, who had approached the speakers unperceived; and he now threw in a word.

"So there are suspected witches in Pendle Forest, I find," he said. "I shall make it my business to institute inquiries concerning them, when I visit the place to-morrow. Even if merely ill-reputed, they must be examined, and if found innocent, cleared; if not, punished according to the statute. Our sovereign lord the king holdeth witches in especial abhorrence, and would gladly see all such noxious vermin extirpated from the land, and it will rejoice me to promote his laudable designs. I must pray you to afford me all the assistance you can in the discovery of these dreadful delinquents, good Master Nicholas, and I will take care that your services are duly represented in the proper quarter. As I have just said, the king taketh singular interest in witchcraft, as you may judge if the learned tractate he hath put forth, in form of a dialogue, intituled '*Dæmonologie*,' hath ever met your eye; and he is never so well pleased as when the truth of his tenets are proved by such secret offenders being brought to light, and duly punished."

"The king's known superstitious dread of witches makes men seek

them out to win his favour," observed Mistress Nutter. "They have wonderfully increased since the publication of that baneful book!"

"Not so, madam," replied Potts. "Our sovereign lord the king hath a wholesome and just hatred of such evil-doers and traitors to himself and Heaven, and it may be dread of them, as indeed all good men must have; but he would protect his subjects from them, and therefore, in the first year of his reign, which I trust will be long and prosperous, he hath passed a statute, whereby it is enacted 'that all persons invoking any evil spirit, or consulting, covenanting with, entertaining, employing, feeding, or rewarding any evil spirit; or taking up dead bodies from their graves to be used in any witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; or killing or otherwise hurting any person by such infernal arts, shall be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, and suffer death.' This statute, madam, was intended to check the crimes of necromancy, sorcery, and witchcraft, and not to increase them. And I maintain that it has checked them, and will continue to check them."

"It is a wicked and bloody statute," observed Mistress Nutter, in a deep tone, "and many an innocent life will be sacrificed thereby."

"How, madam!" cried Master Potts, staring aghast. "Do you mean to impugn the sagacity and justice of our high and mighty king, the head of the law, and defender of the faith?"

"I affirm that this is a sanguinary enactment," replied Mistress Nutter, "and will put power into hands that will abuse it, and destroy many guiltless persons. It will make more witches than it will find."

"Some are ready made, methinks," muttered Potts, and we need not go far to find them. You are a zealous advocate for witches, I must say, madam," he added, aloud, "and I shall not forget your arguments in their favour."

"To my prejudice, I doubt not," she rejoined, bitterly.

"No, to the credit of your humanity," he answered, bowing, with pretended conviction.

"Well, I will aid you in your search for witches, Master Potts," observed Nicholas; "for I would gladly see the country rid of these pests. But I warn you the quest will be attended with risk, and you will get few to accompany you, for all the folk hereabouts are mortally afraid of these terrible old hags."

"I fear nothing in the discharge of my duty," replied Master Potts, courageously; "for as our high and mighty sovereign hath well and learnedly observed—'if witches be but apprehended and detained by any private person, upon other private respects, their power, no doubt, either in escaping, or in doing hurt, is no less than ever it was before. But if, on the other part, their apprehending and detention be by the lawful magistrate upon the just respect of their guiltiness in that craft, their power is then no greater than before that ever they meddled with their master. For where God begins justly to strike by his lawful lieutenants, it is not in the devil's power to defraud or bereave him of the office or effect of his powerful and revenging sceptre.' Thus I am safe; and I shall take care to go armed with a proper warrant, which I shall obtain from a magistrate, my honoured friend and singular good client, Master Roger Nowell. This will obtain me such assistance as I may require, and for due observance of my authority I shall likewise take with me a peace-officer, or constable."

"You will do well, Master Potts," said Nicholas; "still you must not put faith in all the idle tales told you, for the common folk hereabouts are blindly and foolishly superstitious, and fancy they discern witchcraft in every mischance, however slight, that befals them. If ale turn sour after a thunderstorm, the witch hath done it; and if the butter cometh not quickly, she hindereth it. If the meat roast ill, the witch hath turned the spit; and if the lumber pie taste ill, she hath had a finger in it. If your sheep have the foot-rot—your horses the staggers or string-halt—your swine the measles—your hounds a surfeit—or your cow slippeth a calf—the witch is at the bottom of it all. If your maid hath a fit of the sullens, or doeth her work amiss, or your man breaketh a dish, the witch is in fault, and her shoulders can bear the blame. On this very day of the year—namely, May-day,—the foolish folk hold any aged crone who fetcheth fire to be a witch, and if they catch a hedgehog among their cattle, they will instantly beat it to death with sticks, concluding it to be an old hag in that form come to dry up the milk of their kine."

"These are what Master Potts's royal authority would style 'mere old wives' trattles about the fire,'" observed Mistress Nutter, scornfully.

"Better be over-credulous than over-sceptical," replied Potts. "Even at my lodging in Chancery-lane I have a horseshoe nailed against the door. One cannot be too cautious when one has to fight against the devil, or those in league with him. Your witch should be put to every ordeal. She should be scratched with pins to draw blood from her; weighed against the church bible, though this is not always proof; forced to weep, for a witch can only shed three tears, and those only from the left eye; or, as our sovereign lord the king truly observeth—no offence to you, Mistress Nutter—'Not so much as their eyes are able to shed tears, albeit the womenkind especially be able otherwise to shed tears at every light occasion when they will, yea, although it were dissemblingly like the crocodile;' and set on a stool for twenty-four hours, with her legs tied across, and suffered neither to eat, drink, nor sleep during the time. This is the surest way to make her confess her guilt next to swimming. If it fails, then cast her with her thumbs and toes tied across into a pond, and, if she sink not, then is she certainly a witch. Other trials there are, as that by scalding water—sticking knives across—heating of the horseshoe—tying of knots—the sieve and the shears; but the only ordeals safely to be relied on, are the swimming and the stool before mentioned, and from these your witch shall rarely escape. Above all, be sure and search carefully for the witch-mark. I doubt not we shall find it fairly and legibly writ in the devil's characters on Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. They shall undergo the stool and the pool, and other trials, if required. These old hags shall no longer vex you, good Master Nicholas. Leave them to me, and doubt not I will bring them to condign punishment."

"You will do us good service then, Master Potts," replied Nicholas. "But, since you are so learned in the matter of witchcraft, resolve me, I pray you, how it is, that women are so much more addicted to the practice of the black art than our own sex."

"The answer to the inquiry hath been given by our British Solomon," replied Potts, "and I will deliver it to you in his own words. 'The reason is easy,' he saith, 'for as that sex is frailer than man is, so it is easier to be entrapped in those gross snares of the devil, as was overwell proved to

be true, by the serpent's deceiving of Eva at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sex sensine.'"

"A good and sufficient reason, Master Potts," said Nicholas, laughing. "Is it not so, Mistress Nutter?"

"Ay, marry, if it satisfies you," she answered, dryly. "It is of a piece with the rest of the reasoning of the royal pedant, whom Master Potts styles the British Solomon."

"I only give the learned monarch the title by which he is recognised throughout Christendom," rejoined Potts, sharply.

"Well, there is comfort in the thought that I shall never be taken for a wizard," said the squire.

"Be not too sure of that, good Master Nicholas," returned Potts. "Our prescient prince seems to have had you in his eye when he penned his description of a wizard, for, he saith, 'A great number of them that ever have been convict or confessors of witchcraft, as may be presently seen by many that have at this time confessed, are some of them rich and worldly-wise; some of them fat or corpulent in their bodies; and most part of them altogether given over to the pleasures of the flesh, continual haunting of company, and all kinds of merriness, lawful and unlawful.' This hitteth you exactly, Master Nicholas."

"Zounds!" exclaimed the squire, "if this be exact, it toucheth me too nearly to be altogether agreeable."

"The passage is truly quoted, Nicholas," observed Mistress Nutter, with a cold smile. "I perfectly remember it. Master Potts seems to have the 'Dæmonologie' at his fingers' ends."

"I have made it my study, madam," replied the lawyer, somewhat mollified by the remark, "as I have the statute on witchcraft, and indeed most other statutes."

"We have wasted time enough in this unprofitable talk," said Mistress Nutter, abruptly quitting them, without bestowing the slightest salutation on Potts.

"I was but jesting in what I said just now, good Master Nicholas," observed the little lawyer, nowise disconcerted at the slight, "though they were the king's exact words I quoted. No one would suspect you of being a wizard—ha!—ha! But I am resolved to prosecute the search, and I calculate upon your aid, and that of Master Richard Assheton, who goes with us."

"You shall have mine, at all events, Master Potts," replied Nicholas; "and I doubt not, my cousin Dick's, too."

"Our May Queen, Alizon Device, is Mother Demdike's granddaughter, is she not?" asked Potts, after a moment's reflection.

"Ay, why do you ask?" demanded Nicholas.

"For a good and sufficing reason," replied Potts. "She might be an important witness, for, as King James saith, 'bairns or wives may, of our law, serve for sufficient witnesses and proofs.' And he goeth on to say, 'For who but witches can be proofs, and so witnesses of the doings of witches.'"

"You do not mean to aver that Alizon Device is a witch, sir?" cried Nicholas, sharply.

"I aver nothing," replied Potts; "but, as a relative of a suspected witch, she will be the best witness against her."

"If you design to meddle with Alizon Device, expect no assistance

from me, Master Potts," said Nicholas, sternly, "but rather the contrary."

"Nay, I but threw out the hint, good Master Nicholas," replied Potts. "Another witness will do equally well. There are other children, no doubt. I rely on you, sir; I rely on you. I shall now go in search of Master Nowell, and obtain the warrant and the constable."

"And I shall go keep my appointment with Parson Dewhurst, at the Abbey," said Nicholas, bowing slightly to the attorney, and taking his departure.

"It will not do to alarm him at present," said Potts, looking after him, "but I'll have that girl as a witness, and I know how to terrify her into compliance. A singular woman, that Mistress Alice Nutter. I must inquire into her history. Odd, how obstinately she set her face against witchcraft. And yet she lives at Rough Lee, in the very heart of a witch district, for such Master Nicholas Assheton calls this Pendle Forest. I shouldn't wonder if she has dealings with the old hags she defends—Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. Chattox! Lord bless us, what a name!—There's caldron and broomstick in the very sound! And Demdike is little better. Both seem of diabolical invention. If I can unearth a pack of witches, I shall gain much credit from my honourable good lords the judges of assize in these northern parts, besides pleasing the king himself, who is sure to hear of it, and reward my praiseworthy zeal. Look to yourself, Mistress Nutter, and take care you are not caught tripping. And now, for Master Roger Nowell."

With this, he peered about among the crowd in search of the magistrate, but though he thrust his little turned-up nose in every direction, he could not find him, and therefore set out for the Abbey, concluding he had gone thither.

As Mistress Nutter walked along, she perceived James Device among the crowd, holding Jennet by the hand, and motioned him to come to her. Jem instantly understood the sign, and, quitting his little sister, drew near.

"Tell thy mother," said Mistress Nutter, in a tone calculated only for his hearing, "to come to me, at the Abbey, quickly and secretly. I shall be in the ruins of the old convent church. I have somewhat to say to her, that concerns herself as well as me. Thou wilt have to go to Rough Lee and Malkin Tower to-night."

Jem nodded, to show his perfect apprehension of what was said and his assent to it, and while Mistress Nutter moved on with a slow and dignified step, he returned to Jennet, and told her she must go home directly—a piece of intelligence which was not received very graciously by the little maiden; but nothing heeding her unwillingness, Jem walked her off quickly in the direction of the cottage; but while on the way to it, they accidentally encountered their mother, Elizabeth Device, and therefore stopped.

"Yo mun go up to th' Abbey, directly, mother," said Jem, with a wink; "Mistress Nutter wishes to see ye. Yo'n find her i' t' ruins o' t' owd convent church. Tak kere yo're neaw seen. Yo onderstond."

"Yeigh," replied Elizabeth, nodding her head significantly; "ey'n go at wonst, an' see efter Alizon ot t' same time. Fo ey'm towd hoo has fainted, an been taen to th' Abbey by Lady Assheton."

"Never heed Alizon," replied Jem, gruffly. "Hoo's i' good hands. Ye munna be seen, ey tell ye. Ey'm going to Malkin Tower to-neet, if yo'n owt to send."

"To-neet, Jem?" echoed little Jennet.

"Eigh," rejoined Jem, sharply. "Howd te tongue, wench. Dunna lose time, mother."

And as he and his little sister pursued their way to the cottage, Elizabeth hobbled off towards the Abbey, muttering, as she went, "I hope Alizon an Mistress Nutter winna meet. Nah that it matters, boh still it's better not. Strange, the wench should ha' fainted. Boh she's always foolish an timmersome, an ey half fear has lost her heart to young Richard Assheton. Ey'n watch her narrowly, an if it turn out to be so, she mun be cured, or he secured—ha! ha!"

And muttering in this way, she passed through the Abbey gateway, the wicket being left open, and proceeded towards the ruinous convent church, taking care as much as possible to avoid observation.

Chapter V.

THE GARLAND ON THE GRAVE.

Not far from the green where the May-day revels were held, stood the ancient parish church of Whalley, its square tower surmounted with a flagstaff and banner, and shaking with the joyous peals of the ringers. A picturesque and beautiful structure it was, though full of architectural incongruities, and its grey walls and hoary buttresses, with the lancet-shaped windows of the choir, and the ramified tracery of the fine eastern window, could not fail to please any taste not quite so critical as to require absolute harmony and perfection in a building. Parts of the venerable fabric were older than the Abbey itself, dating back as far as the eleventh century, when a chapel occupied the site, and though many alterations had been made in the subsequent structure at various times, and many beauties destroyed, especially during the period of the Reformation, enough of its pristine character remained to render it a very good specimen of an old country church. Internally, the cylindrical columns of the north aisle, the construction of the choir, and the three stone seats supported on rounded columns near the altar, proclaimed its high antiquity. Within the choir were preserved the eighteen richly-carved stalls once occupying a similar position in the desecrated conventual church; and though exquisite in themselves, they seemed here sadly out of place, not being proportionate to the structure. Their elaborately-carved seats projected far into the body of the church, and their crocketed pinnacles shot up almost to the ceiling. But it was well they had not shared the destruction in which almost all the other ornaments of the magnificent fane they once decorated were involved. Carefully preserved, the black varnished oak well displayed the quaint and grotesque designs with which many of them—the prior's stall in especial—were embellished. Chief among them was the abbot's stall, festooned with sculptured vine wreaths and clustering grapes, and bearing the auspicious inscription:

Semper gaudentes sint ista sede sedentes:

singularly inapplicable, however, to the last prelate who filled it. Some fine old monuments, and warlike trophies of neighbouring wealthy families, adorned the walls, and within the nave was a magnificent pew, with a canopy and pillars of elaborately-carved oak, and lattice-work at the sides, allotted to the manor of Read, and recently erected by Roger Nowell; while in the north and south aisles were two small chapels, converted since the reformed faith had obtained, into pews—the one, called Saint Mary's Cage, belonging to the Assheton family; and the other, appertaining to the Catterals of Little Mitton, and designated Saint Nicholas's Cage. Under the last-named chapel were interred some of the Paslews of Wiswall, and here lay the last unfortunate Abbot of Whalley, between whose grave and the Assheton and Braddyll families, a fatal relation was supposed to subsist. Another large pew, allotted to the Towneleys, and designated Saint Anthony's Cage, was rendered remarkable, by a characteristic speech of Sir John Towneley, which gave much offence to the neighbouring dames. Called upon to decide as to the position of the sittings in the church, the discourteous knight made choice of Saint Anthony's Cage, already mentioned, declaring, "My man Shuttleworth, of Hacking, made this form, and here will I sit when I come, and my cousin Nowell may make a seat behind me if he please, and my son Sherburne shall make one on the other side, and Master Catteral another behind him, and for the residue the use shall be, first come first speed, and that will make the proud wives of Whalley rise betimes to come to church." One can fancy the rough knight's chuckle, as he addressed these words to the old clerk, certain of their being quickly repeated to the "proud wives" in question.

Within the churchyard grew two fine old yew trees, now long since decayed and gone, but then spreading their dark green arms over the little turf-covered graves. Reared against the buttresses of the church was an old stone coffin, together with a fragment of a curious monumental effigy, likewise of stone; but the most striking objects in the place, and deservedly ranked amongst the wonders of Whalley, were three remarkable obelisk-shaped crosses, set in a line upon pedestals, covered with singular devices in fretwork, and all three differing in size and design. Evidently of remotest antiquity, these crosses were traditionally assigned to Paullinus, who, according to the Venerable Bede, first preached the Gospel in these parts, in the early part of the seventh century; but other legends were attached to them by the vulgar, and dim mystery brooded over them.

Vestiges of another people and another faith were likewise here discernible, for where the Saxon forefathers of the village prayed and slumbered in death, the Roman invaders of the isle had trodden and perchance performed their religious rites; some traces of an encampment being found in the churchyard by the historian of the spot, while the north boundary of the hallowed precincts was formed by a deep foss, once encompassing the nigh-obliterated fortification. Besides these records of an elder people, there was another memento of bygone days and creeds in a little hermitage and chapel adjoining it, founded in the reign of Edward III., by Henry, Duke of Lancaster, for the support of two recluses and a priest to say masses daily for him and his descendants; but this pious bequest being grievously abused in the subsequent reign of

Henry VI. by Isole de Heton, a fair widow, who, in the first transports of grief vowing herself to Heaven, took up her abode in the hermitage, and led a very disorderly life therein, to the great scandal of the Abbey, and the great prejudice of the morals of its brethren, and at last, tired even of the slight restraint imposed upon her, fled away "contrary to her oath and profession, not willing, nor intending to be restored again," the hermitage was dissolved by the pious monarch, and masses ordered to be said daily in the parish church for the repose of the soul of the founder. Such was the legend attached to the little cell, and tradition went on to say that the anchoress broke her leg in crossing Whalley Nab, and limped ever afterwards; a just judgment on such a heinous offender. Both these little structures were picturesque objects, being overgrown with ivy and woodbine. The chapel was completely in ruins, while the cell, profaned by the misdoings of the dissolute votaress Isole, had been converted into a cage for vagrants and offenders, and made secure by a grated window, and a strong door studded with broad-headed nails.

The view from the churchyard, embracing the vicarage-house, a comfortable residence, surrounded by a large walled-in garden, well stocked with fruit trees, and sheltered by a fine grove of rook-haunted timber, extended on the one hand over the village, and on the other over the Abbey, and was bounded by the towering and well-wooded heights of Whalley Nab. On the side of the Abbey, the most conspicuous objects were the great north-eastern gateway with the ruined conventual church. Ever beautiful, the view was especially so on the present occasion, from the animated scene combined with it; and the pleasant prospect was enjoyed by a large assemblage, who had adjourned thither to witness the concluding part of the festival.

Within the green and flower-decked bowers which, as has before been mentioned, were erected in the churchyard, were seated Doctor Ormerod and Sir Ralph Assheton, with such of their respective guests as had not already retired, including Richard and Nicholas Assheton, both of whom had returned from the Abbey; the former having been dismissed by Lady Assheton from further attendance upon Alizon, and the latter having concluded his discourse with Parson Dewhurst, who, indeed, accompanied him to the church, and was now placed between the vicar and the rector of Middleton. From this gentle elevation the gay company on the green could be fully discerned, the tall maypole, with its garlands and ribands, forming a pivot, about which the throng ever revolved, while stationary amidst the moving masses, the rush-cart reared on high its broad green back, as if to resist the living waves constantly dashed against it. By-and-by a new kind of movement was perceptible, and it soon became evident that a procession was being formed. Immediately afterwards the rush-cart was put in motion, and winded slowly along the narrow street leading to the church, preceded by the morris-dancers, and the other May-day revellers, and followed by a great concourse of people, shouting, dancing, and singing.

On came the crowd. The jingling of bells and the sound of music grew louder and louder, and the procession, lost for awhile behind some intervening habitations, though the men bestriding the rush-cart could be discerned over their summits, burst suddenly into view; and the revellers

entering the churchyard, drew up on either side of the little path leading to the porch, while the rush-cart coming up the next moment, stopped at the gate. Then four young maidens, dressed in white and having baskets in their hands, advanced and scattered flowers along the path; after which ladders were reared against the sides of the rush-cart, and the men descending from their exalted position, bore the garlands to the church, preceded by the vicar and the two other divines, and followed by Robin Hood and his band, the morris-dancers, and a troop of little children singing a hymn. The next step was to unfasten the bundles of rushes, of which the cart was composed, and this was very quickly and skilfully performed, the utmost care being taken of the trinkets and valuables with which it was ornamented. These were gathered together in baskets and conveyed to the vestry, and there locked up. This done, the bundles of rushes were taken up by several old women, who strewed the aisles with them, and placed such as had been tied up as mats in the pews. At the same time, two casks of ale set near the gate, and given for the occasion by the vicar, were broached, and their foaming contents freely distributed among the dancers and the thirsty crowd. Very merry were they, as may be supposed, in consequence, but their mirth was happily kept within due limits of decorum.

When the rush-cart was well-nigh unladen, Richard Assheton entered the church, and greatly pleased with the effect of the flowery garlands with which the various pews were decorated, said as much to the vicar, who smilingly replied, that he was glad to find he approved of the practice, "even though it might savour of superstition;" and, as the good doctor walked away, being called forth, the young man almost unconsciously turned into the chapel on the north aisle. Here he stood for a few moments gazing round the church, wrapt in pleasing meditation, in which many objects, somewhat foreign to the place and time, passed through his mind, when, chancing to look down, he saw a small funeral wreath, of mingled yew and cypress, lying at his feet, and a slight tremor passed over his frame, as he found he was standing on the ill-omened grave of Abbot Paslew. Before he could ask himself by whom this sad garland had been so deposited, Nicholas Assheton came up to him, and with a look of great uneasiness cried, "Come away instantly, Dick. Do you know where you are standing?"

"On the grave of the last Abbot of Whalley," replied Richard, smiling.

"Have you forgotten the common saying," cried Nicholas, "that the Assheton who stands on that unlucky grave shall die within the year? Come away at once."

"It is too late," replied Richard; "I have incurred the fate, if such a fate be attached to the tomb, and as my moving away will not preserve me, so my tarrying here cannot injure me further. But I have no fear."

"You have more courage than I possess," rejoined Nicholas. "I would not set foot on that accursed stone for half the county. Its malign influence on our house has been approved too often. The first to experience the fatal destiny were Richard Assheton and John Braddyll, the purchasers of the Abbey. Both met here together on the anniversary of the abbot's execution—some forty years after its occurrence, it is true, and when they were both pretty well stricken in years—and within that year, namely

1578, both died, and were buried in the vault on the opposite side of the church, not many paces from their old enemy. The last instance was my poor brother Richard, who, being incredulous as you are, was resolved to brave the destiny, and stationed himself upon the tomb during divine service; but he, too, died within the appointed time."

"He was bewitched to death—so, at least, it is affirmed," said Richard Assheton, with a smile. "But I believe in one evil influence just as much as in the other."

"It matters not how the destiny be accomplished, so it come to pass," rejoined the squire, turning away. "Heaven shield you from it!"

"Stay!" said Richard, picking up the wreath. "Who, think you, can have placed this funeral garland on the abbot's grave?"

"I cannot guess," cried Nicholas, staring at it in amazement: "an enemy of ours, most likely. It is neither customary nor lawful in our Protestant country so to ornament graves. Put it down, Dick."

"I shall not displace it, certainly," replied Richard, laying it down again; "but I as little think it has been placed here by a hostile hand, as I do that harm will ensue to me from standing here. To relieve your anxiety, however, I will come forth," he added, stepping into the aisle. "Why should an enemy deposit a garland on the abbot's tomb, since it was by mere chance that it hath met my eyes?"

"Mere chance!" cried Nicholas; "everything is mere chance with you philosophers. There is more than chance in it. My mind misgives me strangely. That terrible old Abbot Paslew is as troublesome to us in death, as he was during life to our predecessor, Richard Assheton. Not content with making his tombstone a weapon of destruction to us, he pays the Abbey itself an occasional visit, and his appearance always betides some disaster to the family. I have never seen him myself, and trust I never shall; but other people have, and have been nigh scared out of their senses by the apparition."

"Idle tales, the invention of over-heated brains," rejoined Richard. "Trust me, the abbot's rest will not be broken till the day when all shall rise from their tombs; though if ever the dead (supposing such a thing possible) could be justified in injuring and affrighting the living, it might be in his case, since he mainly owed his destruction to our ancestor. On the same principle, it has been held that church-lands are unlucky to their lay-possessors; but see how this superstitious notion has been disproved in our own family, to whom Whalley Abbey and its domains have brought wealth, power, and worldly happiness."

"There is something in the notion, nevertheless," replied Nicholas; "and though our case may, I hope, continue an exception to the rule, most grantees of ecclesiastical houses have found them a curse, and the time may come when the Abbey may prove so to our descendants. But without discussing the point, there is one instance in which the malignant influence of the vindictive abbot has undoubtedly extended long after his death. You have heard, I suppose, that he pronounced a dreadful anathema upon the child of a man who had the reputation of being a wizard, and who afterwards acted as his executioner. I know not the whole particulars of the dark story, but I know that Paslew fixed a curse upon the child, declaring it should become a witch, and the mother of witches. And the prediction has been verified. Nigh eighty years have

flown by since then, and the infant still lives—a fearful and mischievous witch—and all her family are similarly fated—all are witches."

"I never heard the story before," said Richard, somewhat thoughtfully; "but I guess to whom you allude—Mother Demdike, of Pendle Forest, and her family."

"Precisely," rejoined Nicholas; "they are a brood of witches."

"In that case, Alizon Device must be a witch," cried Richard; "and I think you will hardly venture upon such an assertion after what you have seen of her to-day. If she be a witch, I would there were many such—as fair and gentle. And see you not how easily the matter is explained? 'Give a dog an ill name and hang him'—a proverb with which you are familiar enough. So with Mother Demdike. Whether really uttered or not, the abbot's curse upon her and her issue has been bruited abroad, and hence she is made a witch, and her children are supposed to inherit the infamous taint. So it is with yon tomb. Is is said to be dangerous to our family, and dangerous no doubt it is to those who believe in the saying, which, luckily, I do not. The prophecy works its own fulfilment. The absurdity and injustice of yielding to the opinion are manifest. No wrong can have been done the abbot by Mother Demdike, any more than by her children; and yet they are to be punished for the misdeeds of their predecessor."

"Ay, just as you and I, who are of the third and fourth generation, may be punished for the sins of our fathers," rejoined Nicholas. "You have Scripture against you, Dick. The only thing I see in favour of your argument is, the instance you allege of Alizon. She does not look like a witch, certainly; but there is no saying. She may be only the more dangerous for her rare beauty and apparent innocence!"

"I would answer for her truth with my life!" cried Richard, quickly. "It is impossible to look at her countenance, in which candour and purity shine forth, and doubt her goodness."

"She hath cast her spells over you, Dick, that is certain," rejoined Nicholas, laughing; "but to be serious. Alizon, I admit, is an exception to the rest of the family, but that only strengthens the general rule. Did you ever remark the strange look they all—save the fair maid in question—have about the eyes?"

Richard answered in the negative.

"It is very singular, and I wonder you have not noticed it," pursued Nicholas; "but the question of reputed witchcraft in Mother Demdike has some chance of being speedily settled; for Master Potts, the little London lawyer, who goes with us to Pendle Forest to-morrow, is about to have her arrested and examined before a magistrate."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Richard; "this must be prevented."

"Why so?" exclaimed Nicholas, in surprise.

"Because the prejudice existing against her is sure to convict and destroy her," replied Richard. "Her great age, infirmities, and poverty, will be proofs against her. How can she, or any old enfeebled creature like her, whose decrepitude and misery should move compassion rather than excite fear—how can such a person defend herself against charges easily made and impossible to refute? I do not deny the possibility of witchcraft, even in our own days, though I think it of very unlikely occurrence; but I would determinately resist giving credit to any tales told by

the superstitious vulgar, who, naturally prone to cruelty, have so many motives for revenging imaginary wrongs. It is placing a dreadful weapon in their hands, of which they have cunning enough to know the use, but neither mercy nor justice enough to restrain them from using it. Better let one guilty person escape, than many innocent perish. So many undefined charges have been brought against Mother Demdike, that at last they have fixed a stigma on her name, and made her an object of dread and suspicion. She is endowed with mysterious power, which would have no effect if not believed in; and now must be burned because she is called a witch, and is doting and vain enough to accept the title."

"There is something in a witch difficult, nay, almost impossible to describe," said Nicholas, "but you cannot be mistaken about her. By her general ill course of life, by repeated acts of mischief, and by threats, followed by the consequences menaced, she becomes known. There is much mystery in the matter, not permitted human knowledge entirely to penetrate; but, as we know from the Scriptures that the sin of witchcraft did exist, and as we have no evidence that it has ceased, so it is fair to conclude that there may be practisers of the dark offence in our own days; and such I hold to be Mother Demdike and Mother Chattox. Rival potentates in evil, they contend which shall do most mischief; but it must be admitted the former bears away the bell."

"If all the ill attributed to her were really caused by her machinations, this might be correct," replied Richard, "but it only shows her to be more calumniated than the other. In a word, cousin Nicholas, I look upon them as two poor old creatures who, persuaded they really possess the supernatural power accorded to them by the vulgar, strive to act up to their parts, and are mainly assisted in doing so by the credulity and fears of their audience."

"Admitting the blind credulity of the multitude," said Nicholas, "and their proneness to discern the hand of the witch in the most trifling accidents; admitting, also, their readiness to accuse any old crone unlucky enough to offend them of sorcery; I still believe that there are actual practisers of the black art, who, for a brief term of power, have entered into a league with Satan, worship him and attend his sabbaths, and have a familiar, in the shape of a cat, dog, toad, or mole, to obey their behests, transform themselves into various shapes—as a hound, horse, or hare,—raise storms of wind or hail, maim cattle, bewitch and slay human beings, and ride whither they will on broomsticks. But holding the contrary opinion, you will not, I apprehend, aid Master Potts in his quest of witches."

"I will not," rejoined Richard. "On the contrary, I will oppose him. But enough of this. Let us go forth."

And they quitted the church together.

THE FOOTPRINTS.

BY CORNELIUS COLVILLE.

THE extraordinary adventure I am about to relate occurred in the autumn of 1822. I was staying in a remote part of the county of ——, whither I had gone for the benefit of my health. I intended only to remain a fortnight, and, indeed, could ill be spared from home for a longer period, but I had already derived so much benefit from the change of air, that I determined to prolong my stay another week.

The strange occurrence to which I refer happened only a few days before my return home. One evening I strolled a few miles from the house in which I was staying. I had been prevented from walking during the day, owing to the inclement state of the weather. It had rained without intermission from about six o'clock in the morning till about five in the afternoon, when the vapours cleared away, and a beautiful evening succeeded. I had been so severely punished all day in consequence of my compulsory confinement, that I hailed the reappearance of fine weather with the liveliest satisfaction, and resolved to profit by it at once. If, however, I could have foreseen the singular circumstances that were about to befall me, the probability is I should have remained in the house, or, at all events, have gone but a short distance from home.

The evening was beautiful, and nature, after the recent rain, seemed to be reanimated with new life. The foliage of the hedge-rows and trees sparkled with small globules of water, which, as the rays of the setting sun were reflected upon them, appeared to be myriads of the most brilliant diamonds. In some places I observed the golden corn still waving in rich luxuriance, and seeming to invite the sickle of the reaper; in others, the piled up sheaves were already waiting for the husbandmen to remove them.

I had wandered on, delighted with the beautiful and ever-varying scene around me, without paying regard to the distance I had travelled or to time, which heedlessly had been suffered to elapse. The road upon which I had been travelling was not much frequented, and it was one that I was totally unacquainted with. The sun had already sunk behind the hills, and the evening shades were beginning to gather around, when I was reminded that it was time to return. I looked at my watch and was surprised to find it already eight o'clock.

As I have previously stated, the way which I had come was unknown to me, and my attention had been so much directed to the objects around me, that I had paid but little attention to it. I had in several instances diverged from one path to another, and was by no means certain that I could find my way back again without assistance. I looked around me to see if any person or house were within sight, that I might make inquiry; I, however, saw neither. For the first mile or two I was perfectly convinced it was the road I had come; but I at last reached a place where the road branched off in four different directions, and was so completely perplexed, that I knew not which to take. I remained here a full quarter of an hour, hoping that some person would appear in sight and extricate me from the awkward dilemma in which I was placed. I waited in vain; no one appeared. The darkness was fast approaching, and there was little time to lose. The moon had not yet risen, and her absence caused me much uneasiness. I regarded the roads for a few minutes with the greatest attention, and at length took that which, to the best of

my knowledge, appeared to be the right one. As I proceeded, I saw two or three objects which I thought I had previously passed, and this circumstance rendered me more comfortable in my mind than I should otherwise have been. I travelled a considerable distance, but could not perceive that I was getting any nearer home. Indeed, the painful truth now forced itself upon me, that I had taken the wrong road. It was useless to think of retracing my steps, for the path having been tortuous and intricate, I did not think myself capable of doing so. I paused for a few minutes and took a survey of the surrounding country, to ascertain, if possible, my present position. Being totally unacquainted with the locality, I could not form the most remote idea. A gleam of hope suddenly burst in upon me. I imagined I descried a feeble light in the distance. I gazed at it intently for a few minutes, and was confirmed in my former opinion. I advanced towards it, for I felt sure that if I could gain no information as to my position, I could at least be furnished with some kind of sleeping accommodation for the night. A short while sufficed to enable me to reach the place whence the light issued. It was a small cottage that stood by the road-side. I knocked at the door, but nobody answered my summons. I repeated the process, but with the same result. I stood for a minute or two, and then walked to the window. I listened, and heard a number of voices within. The persons, whoever they might be, were evidently engaged in a dispute; for the debate ran high, and angry words were distinctly audible. The pulse of my heart beat quickly. I was greatly agitated, and scarcely knew what would be the best course to pursue under the circumstances. The hour was now becoming late, and the only light afforded me was from the stars in the blue firmament above. It became necessary, if I could not secure a lodging where I was, to proceed in some direction. After a little hesitation, I again knocked at the door, much louder than I had previously done. This time my application was successful, for some one, in stentorian tone of voice, demanded—

"Who's there?"

"A stranger," I tremulously replied.

"What do you want?" inquired the man, in a surly tone.

"A bed for the night, or——"

"We havn't one for ourselves," was the reply.

"I should be content to lie on the floor," I suggested.

"There's not room," answered the man.

"Will you," I inquired, as a *dernière ressource*, "point me the way to ——, or to the nearest inn."

The man now slowly undid the fastenings of the door, and in a short time his huge, ungainly figure was revealed to my view. His countenance was much disfigured, as though with blows, and its expression very repulsive.

"I do not know that place," he replied. "The nearest inn is about three miles from here. Take the road to the right, and go straight forward."

I thanked him, and walked in the direction he had pointed out. The appearance of the man had not at all prepossessed me in his favour, nor had the noise that I had heard within the cottage tended to lull my suspicions as to the character of its inmates. I could not help thinking there was a reason for refusing me shelter for the night. Some deed was probably to be accomplished which required the presence of as few eye-witnesses as possible. When I was out of the man's sight, I ran for

a considerable distance; for it appeared to me that I was in great danger of being waylaid—robbed, perhaps murdered. It was now very dark, and about ten o'clock. The road I was now traversing was remarkably lonely; skirted, for a great distance on both sides, by thick, umbrageous woods. I walked swiftly forward, trusting that I should at length reach a house where shelter for the night and some refreshment would be afforded me, for I was nearly exhausted by hunger and fatigue.

As far as I can judge, I had travelled upwards of three miles, and still no house of any kind was visible. I was about to give the matter up in despair, and seek shelter under some hedge for the night, when I observed a flickering light, apparently but a short distance to the right. I made no doubt that this was the inn alluded to by the man, and accordingly journeyed on towards it. The light, however, led me entirely from the road on which I had been travelling, and, in order to reach it, it appeared necessary to make a path through the fields, if none was already provided. I looked around me for a few minutes, and at length conceived I had found the proper way; but I speedily discovered my mistake, for when I had arrived at the other end of the field, I saw that it was not a regular footpath. I was, however, determined not to return, so I contrived to make my way through the hedge into the next field. The road became still more disagreeable, especially to a person whose feet were naturally tender, and who had already accomplished a pretty long journey. This was a fallow-field, and full of large clods and stones. I managed, however, to get across it, although I had another fence to climb when I had done so. I passed more quickly through the next two or three fields, but did not seem to be approaching any nearer to the light. I began now, indeed, to fear that it might be some treacherous *ignis fatuus*, or will-o'-the-wisp, that was luring me into all kinds of dangers and difficulties. At this point I nearly gave up the enterprise as hopeless; but my energy again returned, and I hastened forward. Several other fields were crossed, but the goal seemed as far distant as ever. I would not now suffer my exertions to flag, so I pressed on, and, after the elapse of about half an hour, found, to my great joy, that I was now only a few hundred yards from the object of my search. There was still, however, a wood to pass through, which presented as many difficulties as I had as yet encountered; for the underwood was very thick and troublesome, and my hands were frightfully scratched by the brambles.

When I emerged from the wood, the moon, which had now risen, shed a rich silvery light upon a strange, antiquated-looking tower, from a window of which the light which had led me hither issued. The building was a fine specimen of the Norman style of architecture, and seemed so far to have escaped the ravages of time as to render only a few repairs necessary. Its grey and venerable battlements (for it had evidently been used as a place of defence) were overgrown with ivy, which pended in long festoons from their sides. Small loopholes were discernible in several parts of the building, and which served to admit the light to some stone steps that led to the top of the tower. This singular fabric stood on a rising ground, which sloped down to the wood already spoken of. It was much screened from observation by thick copses, which on all sides surrounded it.

I stood for some time surveying the place with eager curiosity. There was something so strange about its appearance—so isolated in its situation, that I was at a loss to conjecture by whom it could be inhabited. It

had certainly none of the appearance of an inn, and was evidently not adapted for such a purpose. It could not, therefore, be the house to which the man had directed me; or, if it were, it seemed probable that, in doing so, he was actuated by interested motives. Who knew but the place might be infested with a band of robbers, and that the inhabitants of the cottage were in connexion with it? I confess there seemed to be rational grounds for such a suspicion. The peculiar position of the tower, the lonely and unfrequented character of the district, the appearance of the man at the cottage, and the violent altercation I had heard, all seemed to favour such a supposition. The hour was very late, and I was excessively hungry and fatigued, but I considered it would be imprudent to make known my presence to the inhabitants of the tower before I had taken a better survey of the place. I therefore walked once or twice round it.

A little to the left of the building there was a small garden, at the end of which was erected a slight wooden structure, which I conceived to be a toolhouse, or a place for the reception of garden-utensils. As it was possible, I thought, to learn something of the character of the proprietor by an inspection of his garden, I accordingly entered it. It was laid out in admirable style, and used only as a flower-garden. I walked up and down it once or twice, and at length my attention was rivetted, and my alarm and curiosity considerably aroused, when I discovered on a portion of the soil certain indentations, made by a human—or, perhaps, more properly speaking—by a *superhuman* foot! This circumstance called for particular attention on my part, from the fact that the impression of the foot was about twice the size of the foot of an ordinary man! I placed my own by the side of it, and was struck with the contrast. Nor was the distance between the several footmarks less surprising, from which it would appear that the length of the person's step (if, indeed, he were a human being) was most incredible. I traced the footprints for several yards, and found that they were all of the same size, and the space between was the same in every instance. I was at the pains to ascertain this, because I conceived it probable that the indentations I had at first observed might not have been made by a person actually walking; but I was now convinced that they were, and, to all appearance, the pedestrian had only been walking in his ordinary way. This discovery alarmed me not a little, and I was quite at a loss to conceive the nature of a being who seemed to differ so widely from ordinary mortals.

I determined to prosecute my search further. The wooden building, of which I have already spoken, was still unexplored: it could contain nothing, I imagined, but perhaps flower-roots, garden-implements, seed packages, &c.; but in this I was grossly deceived. I had some difficulty to encounter in approaching it, for the ground in front was covered with thorns, which it was necessary first to remove before I could open the door. It was not a pleasant task, and I was not so well prepared for it as I might have been under more favourable circumstances. I was both hungry and fatigued, and if I could but have appeased my voracious appetite, I should have quietly lain under the hedge all night, and given up all idea of effecting an entrance into the tower; but the pangs of hunger were excruciating, and I found it absolutely necessary to procure food somewhere. I had tasted nothing since dinner, which I had sparingly partaken of at an early hour. I proceeded to remove the impediment that prevented my approach to the place in question. It occupied me some time in doing so, for my hands were already very tender,

from having so frequently come in contact with the brambles and thorns. I succeeded, however, at length in removing them, and the way was now clear. I took hold of the door, and attempted to draw it towards me, but it resisted my efforts; I concluded that it must be locked. I however examined it closely, but found no indications of a lock. I placed my hand on the other side of the little structure, and discovered that the door was only fastened by a piece of cord. This I speedily untied, and immediately succeeded in throwing the door wide open. God of heaven! I had no sooner done so than I started back with horror, and should have fallen to the ground, but for some wooden palings which now opportunely afforded me support. I shall not forget the spectacle I beheld, and the impression it made upon me. I shook in every limb, and the perspiration streamed copiously from every pore in my body. In the entrance of what I had conceived to be a toolhouse stood, in an erect position, an oblong, wooden box, in which was placed a human body, apparently in the last stage of decomposition. The flesh had nearly all fallen from the face, and the eyes and nose were already gone. Some of the teeth were prominently and disgustingly displayed, whilst others appeared to have fallen out. It was some time before I recovered from the shock I had received; when I did so, I found, in my precipitate retreat, I had neglected to close the door of the wooden building. I hastened to remedy this omission, and to shut up the frightful and disgusting spectacle from the pure air of heaven.

I now knew not what step to take. If I had been so much surprised and horrified at what I had seen in the garden, it was only reasonable to suppose that the tower itself would display other horrors, perhaps of a more fearful and painful a description. The dead body I had seen only tended to confirm me in my previous conjecture as to the character of the occupiers of the tower. I had now no further doubt that they were robbers—murderers—and that the dead body in question was that of one of their victims. Still the footprints upon the soil were inexplicable. I was unable to form any idea as to how they had come there, although I was fully persuaded that they were not those of an ordinary human being.

My hunger was now insupportable, and I would have given anything I possessed to appease it. I examined my pockets, and found that they contained a sovereign and a few shillings in silver. If the inhabitants of the tower were really what I apprehended they were, they could have no inducement to inflict personal injury upon me, if I voluntarily surrendered the money in my possession; and probably their charity would induce them, when I represented my emergency to them, to offer me some food. Filled with this reflection, I advanced to the entrance of this singular building. I knocked at the door loudly with my hand, but received no answer. I repeated the summons, but with no better success. As a last resource, I pushed the door from me, and, to my great astonishment, it flew open.

With considerable hesitation I walked in, and entered a small room on the left. I was struck with the oddity of the furniture, which was old-fashioned, and principally made of oak. A square table stood in the centre, but although I am a man of an average height, the table reached to my chest when I was standing. There were two enormous sized chairs placed at the top and bottom, either of them capable of holding three persons with ease. Further examination revealed to me other articles corresponding in size with those I have named. There was a very large

couch of antique manufacture, which extended from one end of the room to the other, and which could not be less than twelve or thirteen feet in length, and proportionably broad; there was a footstool capable, from its appearance, of bearing the weight of an ox. The massive stone walls of the room were hung, in various places, with a few grim-looking portraits and some faded specimens of embroidery. An excellent fire was burning in the grate, and which gave a somewhat cheerful aspect to the place.

I looked eagerly round for food, and having discovered a small closet, I speedily effected an entrance into it, but had my curiosity only increased for my pains. It contained glasses and articles of crockery-ware of a most unusual size, and capable of holding large quantities of liquor. I determined to extend my search, and, therefore, left this curious apartment, and ascended some stone steps till I came to a door on the right, which I opened. I stepped into the room without ceremony, and which I found to be a bedchamber. The bed it contained was the most extraordinary I ever beheld; its magnitude and apparent strength would have been incredible, had I not seen it with my own eyes. It seemed more adapted for an elephant than for a human being. The dressing-table, washstand, chairs, &c., corresponded in dimensions with this great unwieldly piece of furniture. Who could possibly be the inhabitants of this remarkable place? I had made sufficient noise to alarm a whole household, but nobody appeared. Everything I had seen indicated that the building had only very recently been occupied. The large fire in the room below—the bed ready for the reception of its usual occupiers—the cleanliness, and order everywhere observable—yet, strange to say, it appeared now to be completely deserted, and exposed to the intrusion of any stranger who might wish to enter.

I left this room and ascended some more steps, and entered another chamber, but my surprise was further increased by discovering that the articles in this place were all made on a remarkably diminutive scale. The bed was not more than four-and-a-half feet in length, and very low. The chairs, tables, &c., were made in a similar fashion. I was more perplexed than ever, and began to fancy that I was in some place of enchantment. I presently quitted this room, and finding that the steps now led to the top of the tower, I descended. When I reached the apartment I had at first entered, it is impossible to convey an adequate idea of my astonishment. Upon the table I have described was spread an elegant repast, consisting of beautiful pastry, sandwiches, and some excellent wines! I did not stay to ask whence it had come from, though I was half inclined to think it had been sent by some good fairy. After I had gratified my appetite, I began to reflect upon the matter, and was almost persuaded to believe that I was actually in a place which was under the spell of some potent enchanter.

Whilst turning this matter over in my mind, I fancied I heard the cries of a human being in the greatest agony. I listened, and the sorrowful tones were repeated. They seemed to proceed from below. I continued to listen, but they suddenly ceased altogether, and I threw myself upon the couch and fell asleep.

I slept two or three hours, when I suddenly started up. I know not whether there was an impression upon my mind that some event was about to happen, but I felt alarmed and uneasy. The moon was still shining with her former splendour, pouring a rich flood of light upon the foliage of the surrounding trees. I approached the window, and was

horror-struck to behold a figure of prodigious size rapidly advancing towards the tower. He wore a kind of blouse; and a thick leather belt, with a large buckle in front, was fastened round his waist. On his head he wore a thick sable cap. He was not long in reaching the tower, which he entered without ceremony. I was about to throw myself before him and implore his mercy, when, by a signal of his hand, he prevented me. In as few words as possible I explained to him the various circumstances which had caused me to become an inmate of his residence. I of course concluded he was the owner of the place. He smiled benevolently, and told me to retire again to rest.

I arose late on the following morning. My host was not long behind me. He was the most extraordinary man I ever saw; perfectly formed, but of the most gigantic stature. I informed him of the alarm I had experienced at what I had seen and heard in the tower. I deemed it prudent to be silent for the present as to the discovery I had made in the garden.

"Everything which you have seen and heard," said mine host, "is easily accounted for. I am what is popularly called a giant, and till within a year ago, both myself and wife (who was a giantess) used to travel round the country exhibiting ourselves to the public. By this means we accumulated a sufficient sum of money to retire into private life; and, being anxious to escape observation, bought this old tower, where the curiosity of the idle put us to no inconvenience. My wife has been dead six months. The room with the diminutive furniture was provided for an old friend of mine—a dwarf, who still travels, and occasionally visits me."

I further asked him to explain in what way the repast of which I had partaken on the previous night had been provided, and the meaning of the mournful cries I had heard.

"In an apartment beneath the tower," resumed mine host, "and to which you have access from behind, there is an old bedridden woman and her daughter, the former of whom is an old servant of mine. She is often, in her bodily pain, heard to make loud lamentation. The supper of which you partook was prepared for me."

I at once apologised for the liberty I had taken with it.

"How far shall I be from ——, then?" I asked.

"About eight miles. I will show you in what direction to go; but before you depart, I must be permitted to show you a curiosity. Step this way."

And he led me to the garden, and proceeded to the wooden building previously referred to.

I startled involuntarily back when I perceived his object. I, however, concealed my agitation, so as to give rise to no suspicion upon his part.

He opened the door of the structure, and revealed to me once more the horrible corpse I had gazed upon on the preceding night.

"This is an Egyptian mummy," he said, "and which we used to exhibit to the public. It belongs to a period 1200 years before the Christian era, and was the daughter of the highpriest of Thebes."

I was now more reconciled to the repulsive object, and examined it with some attention, though it was still very hideous.

My host now pointed out to me the road I was to take. I thanked him for his kindness, and bade him farewell. When I reached home, the story I have just related was declared by all to whom I related it to be incredible, but I can assure the reader it is strictly true.

"TOMMY."

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, JUN.

THE familiar abbreviation of a patronymic placed at the head of this essay is not, as at first sight might be imagined, intended to herald an account of some son of the soil who has "shuffled off this mortal coil" under circumstances worthy of being recorded, as offering variety to the general exits of the human family from the stage of life; nor yet is it intended as the precursor of a dissertation on the abbreviations of nomenclature. No; the writer has a far different object in view, being neither more nor less than that of bestowing a title on a prominent, and, to an observer, a striking feature in every-day life, and which has hitherto been without a name.

The reader will probably be startled at the boldness of the attempt; and, should he not find the appellation chosen a felicitous one, or, at least, possessing some claims to be received as a happy hit, he will, of course, be justified in applying to the attempt any epithet he may choose, consigning it to that oblivion which ever has, and ever will, await the aspirations of fustian.

The writer would, however, premise that he does not claim to be the originator of an appellation which, amongst those who have adopted it, has been found of infinite service; yet, with the admission that he is not the actual originator, he cannot deny himself the opportunity of observing that, by explaining the applicability of the term to a few, he has since marked its advancement and general adoption with the many, and has been frequently struck with the remarks of some who, finding it so useful an auxiliary to their mother tongue, have confessed that, without the adoption of the title of this essay, it would be all but an impossibility to make intelligible their opinions on things which, as we have before remarked, are represented before the observant eye in scenes of every-day life.

Before proceeding further with the subject, we would observe, that our ambition is not to instruct, but to amuse; and that, although an anomaly in language is here presented, an expression at variance with the accepted phraseology of the day, and although very far from dignified or profound, we feel justified in thus advancing it, as it has taken with all sorts of people—the more thought upon by them, the greater ideas have been conceived of it—and has made such impressions as bid fair not to be worn out or effaced. For, as has been well observed, "True it is, when parties of various humours and inclinations join in the same approbation of any action or thing, the union of sentiment, the combination of so many different judgments, stamps an indisputable value on that which meets with such universal applause."

But what is Tommy?

Tommy is the title of a great whole, admitting of innumerable classifications. There is the Tommy of Society, of the Stage, the Pulpit, and the Bar, and very many others. Without further enumeration, we will now plunge *in medias res*, and give, as they suggest themselves, sketches illustrative of the title of this paper.

For this purpose, reader, we will trouble you to exercise your organ of imagination, and conceive yourself, with us, in a spacious concert-hall, in

a leviathan town of the north, celebrated for its music and misery, clouds, calico, and cash.

We introduce you as a stranger to this assemblage of wealth and beauty, rendered highly select by an exclusive system adopted in the admission of members, and which ensures the Tommy of high (that is the town's term for wealthy) provincial society being presented to us. It is a full dress, and consequently a fashionable night. Observe the looks of the visitors already seated at the last comers as they enter—the nods, the smiles, the whispered comments, the hurried salute. Our seats, you perceive, command a good view of the room. This part, you must know, is called Market-row, so named from the promenading *beaux* being enabled here to obtain snatches of conversation with the fair ones who are in the market, and who, being so, make it a point in this particular *locale* to obtain good places. Having given you this piece of information, you will not be surprised to hear that many matches have originated on this very spot, and, that consequently, the whole system is viewed quite in a commercial point of view.

The hall is nearly full, yet many are still crowding in, and not a few turn to the gallery, evidently much disappointed in being unable to obtain seats here below. Observe yon old dowager with the fair girl by her side. See, they stop to address the chattering trio on our right. Listen! "Ah, Miss Jane, I am delighted to see you! Hope you are well. Fanny, you are looking charming to-night, I declare. How is papa? When will you give us a call? We shall be most happy to see you." And she hurries away with her companion, not one of her three questions answered, nor answering one of a similar number addressed to them by Miss Jane and her friends, in the same hollow complimentary manner. Yes, so it is, reader; we are now surrounded by the atmosphere of Tommy.

What a buzz there is around us. Strange as it may appear, we assure you that this, and the interval between the first and second part of the concert, are the most prized portions of the evening's amusements. If you are a lover of music, and anticipate that, at the commencement of the concert, this general chatter will cease, much disappointed will you be. There will certainly not be such a universal babble as you now hear, for the simple reason that amongst this large assembly there are sure to be some who come to listen to the music. The majority, however, of the somebodies present will exhibit their Tommyish manners by freely conversing with each other in anything but gentle whispers, whilst some star, who has been paid a guinea for every note he sings, warbles forth an impassioned strain, in a language which probably not eight out of the eight hundred present understand; and we think it but fair to state that, should you, being unknown here, wish to be thought something of, it will be well to take advantage of the first lull that offers itself to make some observations aloud—all the better if delivered when a difficult passage is being executed by the *prima donna* of the night. The words should be loudly and lengthily drawled out; and we would suggest, also, the policy of turning your back to the orchestra as you deliver them. Beware of testifying your admiration by applauding any part of the performance, as that would be a token of excitement which here is pronounced low—very low; yet fail not to join the promenaders round the

room when the first part of the performance shall have terminated, and, by staring at the fair Hebes with an air of assurance and self-admiration, sustain the sensation which your first essay in the art of the Tommy of Society may have created.

Such a preposterous display being repugnant to your feelings and good sense, we will venture to request a further hearing during the interval of the concert, and, whilst the lady-killing *beaux* promenade, continue our remarks on Tommy.

Behold those two figures approaching us; rapid be your glance at the spotless gloves of the twain, the well-cut coat, the neckerchief's faultless tie; allow your thoughts not to dwell long in conjecture as to the probable amount of time each one may have devoted to his looking-glass, nor enter into abstruse conjectures as to the possible difficulty they may individually have struggled with in tearing themselves away from the contemplation of their mirrored likenesses. Examine the expression of each countenance; let them be your study; we know it will be but a brief contemplation; nay, you read all in a glance, but confess yourself at a loss to concentrate that all, to convey the result of your reading of their frontispieces in a word or in a moderate sentence. There is vanity, yes—extreme affectation, yes—abominable pride, yes—yes, and so you might go on far into the catalogue of human weaknesses, and yet not have exactly expressed your meaning or the want of an appellation which would unite and express all, and that word is Tommy—yes, killing Tommy. And why is it killing Tommy? Who can look upon those two countenances, and the many others who are flocking behind them, ogling the seated beauties in the room, and read not that which passes within with as much ease as though each one bore a tablet on his breast with his thoughts legibly inscribed thereon, and were they to give utterance to their thoughts would not this be their language:—

"Look here, here is something worthy your attention; am I not a handsome looking fellow? I remember having heard in my earlier days that I had my mother's eyes, my mother's mouth, and I have not forgotten that my mother was considered very beautiful." Another: "Here is a brow; you may, perhaps, read there is something beneath it; my nose, have I not been told that it is the very counterpart of Byron's, and my locks are almost as luxuriant as my sister's, to say nothing of my new satin stock and pearl pin." Observe the smirking smile which at intervals irradiates their countenances, the self-satisfied glance of the killer as he meets the gaze of some fair daughter of Eve, who is probably reciprocating a little killing Tommy, also!

But here we touch upon delicate ground; let us not venture to dwell upon the little arts which they may legitimately practise in the science of captivation; but, *àpropos* to this, a passage from the Spectator occurs to us on the subject:—

"Women, whose hearts are fixed upon the pleasure they have in the consciousness that they are the objects of love and admiration, are ever changing the air of their countenances and altering the attitudes of their bodies to strike the hearts of their beholders with new sense of their beauty. The dressing part of our sex, whose minds are the same with the sillier part of the other, are exactly in the like uneasy condition to be regarded for a well-tied cravat, a hat cocked with an uncommon briskness,

a very well chosen coat, or other instances of *merit* which they are impatient to see unobserved."

Enough of the Tommy of a public room; let us turn to another of its branches. True friendship knows no Tommy, but insincerity much; and, indeed, the every-day dealings of mankind are full of it. It may be found peeping forth in the pulpit, abounds in the senate, and flourishes in the atmosphere of a court. At a public dinner, a testimonial feast for instance, there is ever a great display of it. The mealy-mouthed orator who, warmed by his subject, or by wine, in expatiating on the character of the gentlemen whose health he is about to propose, feels, by some extraordinary process within his own cranium, justified in attributing to him the possession of such virtues, that the rest of the company must infallibly look upon him as an angel, were he not cased in broad cloth, and had they not a glimmering recollection of having very recently seen him convey into his interior sundry unweighed quantities of such earthly things as roast beef and plum-pudding.

And this gifted and good son of Adam, whose name, according to the gentleman who proposes his health, is destined to descend to posterity as the pure philanthropist, or the immaculate patriot, is probably being tortured whilst listening to panegyrics so freely bestowed, by a knocking at the heart, reproaching him for having so cruelly, only the day before, kicked poor blind beggar Will out of his garden, or by a stinging conviction that the tenant of his waistcoat pocket, in the shape of a hundred pound note, being a slight acknowledgment from the sitting member for the patriot's disinterested services, could another tale unfold; and were it invested with the powers of speech, might, with justice, interrupt the fulsome orator with the cry of "Tommy!"

But the Tommy of the Drama, lovers of Thespis condemn not the theme, nor hastily jump to the conclusion that ridicule of the art is intended. The drama has not a warmer admirer than the writer, nor one who more sincerely regrets that the May of its existence appears to have passed away, and for ever. The drama, there is magic in the name; for though the enthusiasm of the boy may have given place to the more sober admiration of maturer years, where is he who never seeks again that which probably first warmed and inspired his imagination—and if for that alone cherishes a love of it through a lifetime—where is he who has not revelled in the recollection of those young bright hours when fancy's flights were unfettered by the stern realities of life, when the mysterious could cast its spell over the soul, exceeded alone in its thrilling power by the fairy visions of the bright and the beautiful?

With recollections so cherished it may appear strange that we could desire for a moment to show up the Tommy of the stage; and there are many who would, no doubt, join in the declaration which we have frequently heard, that no true lover of the legitimate drama could enjoy or enter into the spirit of aught that might tend to throw discredit on the art, such discredit in their eyes being a travestie of any of Will Shakspeare's undying plays, or of any other piece which has taken its place amongst the few sterling productions which are regarded as models for succeeding writers, and gems of dramatic representation. A friend of ours, whom we will here call Tom Merry, who is a great admirer of burlesque performances, and who has been heard to declare that "Hamlet Travestie" is the best thing he ever beheld, is not willing to concede that

in consequence thereof, he is incapable of appreciating the beauties which abound in "Hamlet," or yet, because tears of laughter have rolled down his cheeks whilst beholding Hammond enact the jealous *Moor*, supported by an *Iago*, who spoke doggrel rhyme with a strong Irish brogue, that he can be pronounced insensible to the unequalled and magnificent language which reveals the passions of the human heart in "Othello." We will not attempt to decide upon the case, but do not hesitate to confess that, like Merry, we have enjoyed many a hearty cachination whilst witnessing the travesties above named.

Our object is to portray the Tommy of the Drama, so frequently brought before the public through the instrumentality of wretched actors and worse writers, who pander to a low taste, and offer up that which is as far removed from reason as it is from nature. Nay, even the best pieces in the hands of some of these depredators on common sense, becomes what we would call Tommy—when talentless Thespians assume the representation of characters requiring a studied knowledge of the author, and the essential ability so to follow in the wake of nature, in the development of the passions, as to enlist by their truthfulness, the spectator's sympathy, and command his admiration. Members of the profession who, for want of genius to conceive, and ability to execute, render that ridiculous which would otherwise be perfect in its illusion and rivetting in its interest—who imagine a knowledge of stage trickery to be an excellent substitute for a knowledge of the workings of the heart, and who gabble over a beautiful passage requiring discrimination and taste in the delivery to arrive at a part, when the stentorian lungs may be safely called into requisition, to vociferate such high-sounding and throaty words as—vengeance and revenge.

The Tommy of the Drama flourishes principally in that department of the art which is but little played at the large, and forms the staple part of the business at the minor theatres, and that is the melodrama, in which the improbable is generally woven with the exaggerated possible, and when the interest is sustained by plenty of incident, and by a series of thrilling stage effects.

Here is the title of a piece which recently had a great run at a minor theatre in one of the large towns of the north; it is a fine specimen of the mysterious Tommy—"Blanche, The Disowned; or, The Fearful Mystery of The Doomed House." Another of the thrilling kind performed at the same place—"Anselmo, The Accursed; or, The Bloody Dagger of The Skeleton Hand;" and another, which was actually headed on the bills A Terrific Hit! entitled, "The Assassin Monk; or, The Spectre of The Mysterious Cavern."

Where is the young playgoer whose imagination would not be excited on perusing the bill announcing either of the above pieces, to revel in the exciting anticipation of beholding the strange revelations concomitant with dark galleries, trap-doors, and secret vaults?

> Each a deep piece where much is to avenge,
> Where the "first heavy" hoarsely cries "Revenge!"
> Where murdering monks emerge from secret cells,
> And ghosts from vaults where dreary darkness dwells;
> Where bandit captains lovely maidens bear
> To rocky caves illum'd by torches' glare;
> Or black assassin in a blacker cloak,
> At dead of night inflicts the deadly stroke;

Or heroine wakening in a vault's deep gloom,
Or yet discover'd by a moonlit tomb;
Where heroes stab themselves and then expire,
Or sudden vanish in a sheet of fire.

In such pieces as we have named, it is highly essential that the heavy business should preponderate, for it will be found that the most successful melodramas are considerably spiced with "deeds of dreadful note."

We remember some years ago, with some friends, being present at the performance of a melodrama, the title of which has escaped us, in which one of the characters, who rejoiced under the appellation of *Caleb*, had much heavy business to do. He was as dark-looking a villain as ever handled cold steel, and his voice was one of the most harsh, inharmonious, and consequently for the character, the most effective we ever heard, not even forgetting the sepulchral tones of the celebrated O. Smith. We cannot recal the precise number of the *dramatis personæ* to whom this truculent fellow administered a *quietus* during the course of the piece, but well remember being struck with the fact that master *Caleb* never appeared but he slaughtered his man; such a desperado never was, no matter who came across his path. The plot was so arranged that *Caleb* had a host of enemies, long and short, big and little, on his own private account, besides others, whom for sums of gold he had pledged himself to introduce to his dagger. There was one scene of a forest, in which a Captain Somebody had lost his way, and whilst he was conveying this piece of intelligence to the audience, it occurred to us that if the captain did not speedily "move on" *Caleb* would be with him. Scarcely had we made the remark to one of our friends, when sure enough that black phizzed gentleman emerged from behind a tree and accosted the captain. It was an anchor to a needle that *Caleb* would tickle his ribs with the well-seasoned blade with which we had seen him let out the elixir of life of so many. The captain, as a matter of course, on being accosted by the new comer, liked not the looks of the fellow, which was not very surprising, and would have been less so had he known as much as we did about him.

"Yes," we exclaimed, "*Caleb* will astonish him!"

But whilst we were cogitating whether robbery would instigate him, or whether the object would be merely to keep his hand in practice, speculation was at once removed by the desperado exclaiming aside,

"Ha, *Captain Brown!* 'twas from his regiment I deserted; should he recognise me—death and hell! Ha, I have it!" and, as we expected, out came the dagger, and in less than a jiffy *Captain Brown* received the said dagger in his brisket, after *Caleb's* most approved method of delivery.

Another of these performances which we witnessed struck us as offering a very fair illustration of what we would call "The Thrilling Tommy of the Drama." In the piece to which we allude, up to the last act, there had not been a solitary case of slaughter. The author has reserved all his strong effects for the last scene to form a tableaux of overpowering interest. As the plot became developed, we saw that there was some very serious business to come, and great things to be crowded into a brief period, for some half-dozen or more had throughout the piece been vowing deadly revenge against each other.

By one of those strange coincidences rarely known in every-day life, but very frequently on the stage, there had been several assignations

made by the various *dramatis personæ* to meet at some ruins at the hour of midnight. It was evident from this that there would be some queer business going on; for it was well known that *Marmaduke* and *Sir Thomas*, *Black Ned* and the *Dutch Skipper*, *Frederick* and *Isabella*, and one or two more, had, during the piece, been at sixes and sevens, and all actuated, more or less, for and against each other.

We will not attempt to unravel the plot, the why and wherefore of the strange doings; suffice it that we give a description of the thrilling tableaux.

The last scene was an old ruined abbey, beside which stood a blasted tree, revealed by the light of a moon just emerging from a mass of black clouds. The curtain rose upon this scene to slow music, and the *Dutch Skipper* shortly entered, saying something about the cold night; a topic which he soon changed to speak of the sums of gold which he was to receive from *Sir Thomas* for keeping back the boy. Approaching footsteps are heard.

"Ha," exclaims the skipper, "'tis *Sir Thomas!*"

But, of course, instead of the gentleman expected, it proves to be somebody else,—no other, indeed, than *Marmaduke*, who instantly recognises the *Dutchman*, as the villain who stole and conveyed the rightful heir to sea. Revenge—*Marmaduke* and the *Skipper* draw—they fight,—riddle diddle (Tommy) music,—a whistle is heard—*Marmaduke* falls stabbed to the heart; and then enters *Black Ned*, who rushes to the footlights, and almost breathless, communicates to the audience that he is suffering from the pangs of remorse, the result of having assisted to murder the present baronet's brother, and stolen the son away; and, having received a refreshing sound of applause from the gods, proceeds to attack his old ally in villany, the *Dutch Skipper*.

After a good deal of slashing work, to which the music maintains an appropriate accompaniment, *Black Ned* serves the skipper as the skipper had served *Marmaduke*. At this period, *Sir Thomas* rushes in pale and haggard. It should be here observed that the *Dutch Skipper*, in the act previous, had revealed to *Sir Thomas*, that *Black Ned* had been playing him treacherous; that the boy he had not murdered, but protected and brought him up under an assumed name; that he was in the neighbourhood, intending to assert his rights,—preparing, with the evidence of *Black Ned*, to charge the baronet with the murder of his, the rightful heir's, father. This will sufficiently account for the baronet looking so haggard and desperate; nor will it be thought surprising that in such an extremity he should commence a vigorous attack on *Black Ned*, rendering the contest which ensued very exciting by drawing a pistol with his left hand from his breast in the midst of their engagement with swords, and blowing out the brains of his antagonist, who dies within a little distance of the foot-lights, after the most approved melo-dramatic style of giving up the ghost. *Frederick*, the rightful heir, at this interesting moment emerges from the ruins; and *Sir Thomas*, mistaking him for something not mortal, staggers backwards, gasping out with shortened breath, words which intimate that he regards the last-comer as a spirit from the dead, the ghost of his murdered brother; but speedily rallying, and recognising the youth as the heir who has come across his path, to dispossess him of his wealth, and to convict him of crime, with a loud

"Ha, ha!" rushes upon him, and after a brief struggle transfixes his weapon in the breast of his second victim.

There now lay dead on the stage, *Marmaduke*, *Black Ned*, and the young heir; so much slaughter was, perhaps, never so condensed before; quite enough for one piece might be imagined; but no, for just as *Sir Thomas* had settled *Master Frederick*, in rushed *Isabella*, pistol in hand, and, taking the villain baronet in flank, shot him dead on the spot. Throwing herself on the lifeless form of *Frederick*, her lover, this spirited heroine next intimated to the audience that she was possessed of a phial containing poison; and, what was more, that she intended to take it; proving as good as her word by swallowing the potion, whilst the curtain descended to slow and appropriate music. That which we have been describing we would call the "Thrilling Dramatic Tommy!"

"Lofty Dramatic Tommy" is presented in a performance wherein some noble fellow, who has, of course, suffered much from adversity, spouts sorrow and sentiment; and who magnanimously refuses to receive relief, or be extricated from his difficulties by the sacrifice of a tittle of his proud and noble spirit. The pathetic when some fair angel of earth parts from her lover, who, through the machinations of a villain is unjustifiably condemned to a felon's death. The pathetic generally tells well at that particular crisis, when the bell is heard to toll, with the officer of the guard pointing the way to the place of execution, the mute anguish of the victim, and the hysterical screams of his betrothed. These, in combination, attain the very acme of the pathetic Tommy, although some may consider it more touching when the lady stands in the relation of wife to the condemned one, with the introduction of a child which, as the melancholy procession crosses the stage, lisps out the affecting inquiry,

"Where is papa going?"

Blowing up the citadel,—red and blue fire,—shouts from the victorious besiegers,—entrance of the true and virtuous prince,—and death of the tyrant, with a strong background of soldiers and civilians forming an imposing tableaux,—presents "Tommy" in grandeur. But we must pause; this paper has grown to a length which we never contemplated, although the subject is all but inexhaustible. If the illustrations we have given do not strike with their truthfulness, and as exemplifying the appositeness of the appellation of "Tommy," we feel assured that to continue would not effect their object. We will, therefore, conclude with this observation, that in the event of the reader laying down our essay with the remark that "there is nothing in it," the writer will, in such case, certainly escape the designation of "Tommy" being applied to his production.

THE ROSE QUEEN.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

By the Rev. James Bandinel.

Chapter I.

THE PRINCESS ALETHÈ.

Reader! did you never hear of the Princess Alethè? If so, I can only pity you for your lamentable ignorance, and assure you, that if you will listen to me, you shall not long remain in such an unhappy predicament. Never heard of the Princess Alethè! Well: *sic transit gloria mundi!* There was a time, not merely during the bloom of her youth and beauty—nay, not merely during her life, but for many hundred years after her death, when every man, woman, and child, from the banks of the Dwina to those of the Xenil, was as well acquainted with the Princess Alethè, her beauty, her virtue, and her strange history, as with the village may-pole or the old church tower. But people are grown forgetful now-a-days: they think of nothing but themselves, and their own appetites, and their own interests. The days of chivalry have passed away, the age of romance has given place to the age of reason—our very infants learn to count on their tiny fingers ere they can speak—our very poets prefer a draft upon Drummonds to a draught from the Castalian spring. No pilgrims now set forth with scrip and wallet—no wandering knights seek hapless captives, to release them from their bonds. The only scrip men carry now-a-days is the scrip of a railway company; the only bonds they look to are Pennsylvanian insecurities. It is not, therefore, after all, so very wonderful that even you, my dear reader, raised as you undoubtedly are above the level of the nineteenth century, by the monthly perusal of the first periodical of the day, should never have heard of the Princess Alethè. You see I have repeated her name several times already, for it is rather a peculiar name, and I wish you to become quite familiar with it before you hear anything more about her. So you shall have it once again.

The Princess Alethè was, at the period at which my story begins, just seventeen years old, all but one day. Seventeen all but one day is a very charming age; and there were at the time in question a great many extremely pretty girls of that age. At least, their fathers and mothers thought so; and, what is more to the purpose, they thought so themselves. And, of course, they must have been the best judges, for they had looked at themselves in the clear still water much oftener and much longer than any one else had done. We are bound, therefore, to believe, on their evidence taken *speciatim* and *seriatim*, that at the time in question there was a most extraordinary and unprecedented number of lovely young creatures just emerging into early womanhood.

Amongst all the maidens of that day, however, there was none to compare in any point, or in any degree, with the Princess Alethè; if they were beautiful, she was beauty's self—if they each possessed one or more exquisite charms of person, or of mind, she combined them all; and what is still more extraordinary is, that, whereas in establishing the loveliness of her contemporaries, we have been obliged to rely principally (and in many cases entirely) on their own evidence, the testimony

of the Princess Alethè is all against herself, and in order to prove her the peerless beauty that we declare her to have been, we must search through all the musty records of that age—we must appeal to high and low, rich and poor, knight and minstrel, chief and vassal, learned and unlearned, young and old, ere we can collect all the requisite statements. We have done so, and we find that, with the single exception of her own voice, they all agree in proclaiming her to be without an equal or a rival. And though her own opinion might at first sight appear to possess some weight, we have, after long and careful examination of manuscripts, discovered one circumstance which entirely invalidates the princess's claim to be heard in her own cause. Dear reader! Lovely reader! Can you believe me? She never looked at herself in her mirror. Yes, alone of all the maidens of her day, she never had recourse to golden speculum or breezeless pool, for the purpose of contemplating her own loveliness.

And lovely she was—lovely as a soft, clear, bright, warm day of early summer. Her eyes were as large, and rich, and soft, as those of the stag; and yet as clear, and bright, and pure, and deep, as the fountain which the sun shines on but cannot fathom. Her brow!—material images are incapable of describing it. Its full contour, its noble height, its calm tranquillity, told of a lofty soul, a powerful mind, and a peaceful conscience. Her cheek!—a pearl glowing in the earliest sunbeam of morning may best express its hue and its transparency. Her lips!—The Rose Queen herself might have been jealous of them: she was not so, however, as you shall see. Her smile!—it was but the accentless voice of her heart, all joy, and love, and goodness, and kindness. Her rich dark ringlets fell in gentle, yet majestic beauty, over a neck and bosom which painters and sculptors might emulate in vain, and even the poet feebly image forth. Her whole form was symmetry—her every action grace.

And she was just seventeen! all but, that is to say; for she wanted one day to complete her seventeenth year. To-morrow she was to *come out!* Yes! even in those days young ladies had to come out, and young gentlemen too for that matter. The young ladies always, when practicable, came out on their seventeenth birthday; the young gentlemen at different ages—none being ever permitted to associate with the brave, or dally with the fair, until he had numbered twenty years, and slain a bear, or boar, or at least a wolf.

Now, Alethè, strange to say, was not at all pleased at the idea of leaving her retirement—she was not, I assure you. Knowing that this statement was likely to be called in question, I have taken great pains to investigate it, and I beg to refer my readers, of both sexes, to the following irrefragable testimonies:—"Treue ācoũt of ye erley yrs of ye pairlesse p.c.sse. Alethe. British Musaeum, Grimmaean Collection. No. 7645, f 123, & f 222 b." "Veritable narn of ye adduentyrs of ye Pcsse Aleye. Bodleian Library—Percian Room. No. 3732, f 32 b, f 35, f 37, & f 127 b."

Having these, as well as many other equally indubitable authorities to fall back upon, I have not the slightest hesitation in reiterating the startling assertion, that the Princess Alethè was not at all pleased with the idea of leaving her retirement. When she found the day approaching, and saw all the preparations that were making for the high festival to be held on the occasion, she begged her father to allow her to remain one vear longer in obscurity. King Alured, however, though generally in-

dulgent was always firm, and in the present instance his daughter's intreaties were unavailing. And at length it was determined, that, as the princess grieved so deeply over her waning childhood, and suffered so much from the sight of all that was going forward, she should, upon the day previous to her seventeenth birthday, celebrate the morrow by anticipation, as she had been wont to celebrate her former birthdays, namely, by spending the hours from sunrise to sunset with her playfellows in the soft glades of the deep forest of Idruna, the outskirts of which extended to within a quarter of a mile of the city of Arlstadt, her father's capital.

So about an hour before sunrise—for early rising was universal among the Teutons of those days, and the princess had always hitherto been in the habit of commencing the enjoyments of her birthday by seeing the sun rise over the deep cleft in the distant Alff Mountains—her whole train was ready to start. The princess herself led the party on a milk-white palfrey, slender, swift, soft-mouthed, and sure-footed; her young female companions, twenty-four in number, all remarkable for their loveliness, following on piebald ponies, her friend, the Lady Alice, riding next to her. By her side rode her great uncle, Sir Reginald, an aged warrior, who had the especial charge of the princess's person and of everything that belonged to her; and the train of maidens was environed by two lines of knights, twenty-four in each column, with two behind to bring up the rear.

These fifty knights demand a few words to themselves, inasmuch as they formed a peculiar feature of the court to which they belonged. They were neither young nor handsome, but, on the contrary, old and ugly; there was not one amongst them who would not have frightened a young lady of the present day into fits. In fact, whenever it chanced, as chance it sometimes would, that any of the princess's guard died, or became bedridden, or otherwise unfit for service, a proclamation was issued that before a certain day testimonials were to be delivered to Prince Reginald by all who wished to present themselves as candidates for the vacant commission. The testimonials were to certify that the aspirant was brave, honest, loyal, true, and extremely ugly. On the day after that on which they had been sent in, the testimonials were examined by the prince and twelve other warriors of high renown, and those only were selected whose courage appeared pre-eminent—whose honour was without reproach, and whose ugliness seemed, as far as the documents in question were concerned, utterly unimpeachable. The numbers having been thus diminished, Sir Reginald named another day, and appointed a tribunal, consisting of single ladies of a certain age, before whom the candidates were to appear. On the day in question, the spinsters took their seats, and the knights were summoned one by one into their presence; this was done twice, so that the fair judges might have ample opportunity for arriving at a decision. If on the second inspection any of the examiners thought any of the examinees sufficiently good-looking to be her partner for life, she was at liberty to take him; and the king, in such case, always gave her a handsome portion. This process, we are told, generally diminished the number of knights by the precise number of ladies, and the examination then went on with the remainder, the ugliest of whom was selected. A modern republican, especially if a woman-hating bachelor, might deem this appropriation of the knights by the spinsters a violation of the rights of man; but the politicians of that day contended, that the candidates were aware of the conditions before they submitted to the ordeal; and

that no one was justified in appearing before the awful tribunal who was not frightful enough to send the stoutest-hearted woman into hysterics, and freeze the gentlest emotions of the most susceptible bosom. They added, that there was still a resource left; for, if the knight pertinaciously preferred the service of the youthful to the love of the adult maiden, he was permitted to cut off his nose, and thus become *facilè princeps*. An eye-witness tells us, that twenty-five out of the fifty knights were noseless. As, however, this statement, in common with others of the same character, is not corroborated by a single contemporary authority, we cannot vouch for its authenticity.

Well, as we before observed, they were all mounted, the princess on her white palfrey with housings of gold, her maidens on their piebald ponies with trappings of silver, and the brave and ugly knights on their jet-black war horses, with their accoutrements of steel; when, lo and behold, as ill-luck would have it, Sir Gerard, with the wall eye, and Sir Gideon with the carbuncle nose—the most highly trusted of the whole corps—fell from their horses in a fit of apoplexy. What was to be done? All was confusion. The princess was much discomposed. Who would not be on such an occasion? Her maidens, with the exception of Lady Alice, began to shriek, and seemed inclined to devote themselves solely to this vocal exhibition; the ugly knights dismounted by common consent, and their steeds, having just received an extra feed all round, proceeded to neigh loudly, to kick, and even to plunge.

Whilst all this was going on, the tumult was yet further increased by the sudden and unexpected arrival of two knights, each rapidly spurring at the head of a small retinue, from exactly opposite directions. They were both well mounted, well caparisoned, and well armed.

Sir Edred of Drontheim, Knight of the Red Dragon, was the son of Oscar of Drontheim, a renowned sea king, by the beautiful Zara, a Moorish princess, whom he had carried off from the coast of Barbary, in one of those expeditions which made the Scandinavian fleets for some centuries the terror of three quarters of the world. He was tall and powerfully made, with a commanding carriage. His features, though dark, were strikingly handsome, and their expression seemed to combine the fierce heroism of Norway with the wild fire of Morocco. None, indeed, could gaze long upon that countenance without feeling that it belonged to one who possessed high powers and almost ungovernable passions.

Sir Eustace of Rheinfels, Knight of the Golden Eagle, seemed almost too fair for masculine beauty; yet there was a proud determination in his deep-blue eye, a royal majesty in his chiselled features, which compelled respect. He had been early instructed in the Christian faith by his uncle Aelfric, a noble Teuton, who, having himself received the truth, had devoted the whole of his time and energy to its diffusion amongst the wild tribes who at that time inhabited the country lying between the Rhine and the Vistula.

The two strangers immediately requested to attend the princess. Alured at first demurred, thinking that it was neither proper in itself, nor fair to his other guests, to allow two such handsome cavaliers to accompany Alethè until she had made her formal appearance in the gay world. He did not like, however, to offend the knights, for the fame of Sir Edred had spread throughout the whole of Europe; and the renown of Eustace, as well as the high estimation in which the king held Aelfric,

rendered him unwilling to refuse him. He remembered, too, that an old witch had once warned him never to allow his daughter to visit the Forest of Idruna without fifty armed knights in her train. With sundry misgivings, therefore, he consented, not, however, without charging Prince Reginald to keep close to his niece during the whole of the day.

Chapter II.

THE FOREST OF IDRUNA.

It was a beautiful morning, that 18th of May, in the year 777. Much time had been lost by the apoplectic seizure of the two veterans, brought on, as is supposed, by their having each quaffed on the preceding night three brimming flagons of alimeth, a glorious compound, for which King Alured was peculiarly famous. It was formed by the mixture, in equal quantities, of mead, from the banks of the Severn, mountain-dew, from the Frith of Forth, and strong beer, from the Upper Danube, and was never given out except on high occasions. In the present instance, the peculiar cellar had been opened in honour of the princess's approaching outcoming; and the two knights, having contrived to appropriate a barrel of the precious liquor, proved the extent of their loyalty by drinking three bumpers to the health of their lovely young mistress.

It was a beautiful morning, we said; and so it was, as the eastern heavens became every instant of a brighter, deeper ruby, and cast a rich warm glow on the long and lofty line of grim black mountains, which rose in stern and barren magnificence behind the eternal Forest of Idruna. For a moment the princess reined up her palfrey, and gazed upon the kindling scene, then plunged at once into the nearest glade, and pressed onward at full speed to the Birthday Knoll. She was not too late. She had just time to reach the well-loved spot, and gaze upon the rich woodland sea which spread for at least fifty miles before her, to the Alff Mountains, when the sun in all his glory rose slowly through the deep opening in the lofty range, and filled both earth and heaven with his golden light, save where the ebon shadow of the sullen mountains rested like the pall of night upon the vales beneath.

"What is that?" said she, speaking without changing the direction of her eyes. "What is that shining black object which juts out from the Northern Mountain, and intercepts a portion of the sun?"

"It looks like a castle," said a clear, rich voice beside her. "Yes, it must be."

She started, for she had not noticed that, in the hurry and confusion of the advance, Sir Eustace had succeeded in gaining her side.

"Looks like a castle, sir knight!" joined in a full, deep voice. "Methinks your eyes must be little practised in knightly adventures if they cannot see, that *it is* a castle."

"It is so very distant," interposed the princess ere Eustace could reply, "that it requires a sight beyond that of mortal man to ascertain the fact from this spot."

"Pardon me, lady," replied Sir Edred, "your own retinue, if I have heard aright, has hitherto been so entirely composed of the maimed and the aged, that you are scarcely aware how far a good knight and true, in the flower of youth or prime of manhood, is expected to see."

"You pay but scanty courtesy," cried Sir Eustace, "to the eyes of the Princess Alethè, jewels without compare, stars without rival, suns before which your orb looks dim."

The knight saw his mistake, and ground his teeth in silence; then, recovering himself, rejoined: "The true heart, lady, is seldom coupled with the fluent tongue. But, as to the point at issue, yon speck is a castle, the Castle of Schreckenstein."

"Strange that I should never have noticed it before! Have you ever remarked it, Alice?"

"It has been raised by Sir Hildebrand, lady, within the last twelve-months."

The group was now increased by the arrival of Prince Reginald, who, taking his niece aside, and assisting her to dismount, commenced a homily to her on her leaving her escort in company with two strangers. It was not very severe, for the old warrior loved the beautiful girl too fondly to treat her with anything approaching to severity. Indeed, who could have been severe upon Alethè? and it was merely in obedience to her father's strict injunction that the old man admonished her of her indiscretion. How long the homily might have lasted we know not, for it must be acknowledged that the prince was rather inclined, at times, to be prosy, especially with his niece, whose gentle nature never permitted her to show, and seldom even to feel, fatigue on such occasions. But, before the princess had time to interrupt his exhortation by any vindication of her own conduct, uncle and niece were startled by the loud barking of a dog. The princess was without fear; and pre-eminently so with regard to the brute creation; for, besides that she was naturally courageous in the highest degree, she had never yet seen the animal, however savage, that did not pay homage to her loveliness and purity. More than once, indeed, had she been in the greatest apparent peril from the ferocious beasts which, during the eighth century, abounded in every European forest; but no sooner had the foe reached her immediate presence, than, awed by a power against which it made no attempt to struggle, instead of devouring or destroying her, it paused in full career, and after a long and intent gaze, retired to the depths of its native wilderness.

Alethè, therefore, followed the sound, and soon found herself in a romantic dell surrounded by high bushes, and approachable only by one narrow inlet. On the other side stood a magnificent bloodhound of enormous size—his eyes glaring, his lips foaming; whilst Sir Edred was just in the act of raising his boar-spear to strike the noble animal to the earth.

"Hold! hold!" cried Alethè; "do not, I beseech you, harm that dog. Pray tell me, sir knight, what is the matter."

"Nothing, madam, nothing. As I was seeking for a flower that might be worthy of your acceptance, I chanced to see yonder ROSE, and was on the point of plucking it, when that fierce animal prevented me. I endeavoured to drive him off, and, not being able to induce him to quit the position which he has taken up, was just going to punish his insolence when your highness appeared. Look at THE ROSE!"

And she did look at the rose! and who could look at it and not love it? I have seen many beautiful roses in my day, for I love the rose right well; but never saw I such a rose as that which now glowed in all its matchless beauty before the Princess Alethè. It was a moss-rose, not quite full blown; but as she gazed on it, the leaves seemed to open more and more and blush a deeper hue, whilst the air around became every moment more exquisitely perfumed. She looked, and looked, and looked; and the dog began to whine piteously.

But her thoughts were suddenly turned into another direction; for Sir Eustace, who from a short distance had seen her enter the thicket, now came up, and perceiving the rose, exclaimed—

"Why does the Princess Alethè delay to press her sister to her bosom?"

"My sister?"

"Yes, lovely princess. Is not yonder rose thy sister? As thou art among maidens, so is she among flowers, lovely without compare. As thou hast hitherto lived in peaceful seclusion, and, if report speaks true, even now shrinkest from the high doom which awaits thee——"

"Enough! enough!" cried Alethè, bursting into tears. "Live my sister! Live in the wild wood, free and alone! I will never tear thee from thy simple paradise to that gaudy scene which is alike distasteful to thee and to me. Live and be blest! And do you, sir knight, spare that noble dog."

"Your will is law, madam," replied Sir Edred, sullenly; and the party having retreated from the thicket, the princess issued strict orders to her retinue that no one should enter the inlet, or otherwise approach the dell. All obeyed her command implicitly, but the gloom which had gathered on Sir Edred's brow seemed to communicate itself to the rest of the party.

The princess, seeing both the effect and the cause, entered into conversation with her northern guest, as they partook together of their early meal, and the darkness soon gave place to a wild and brilliant light that shone from lip, and eye, and cheek, and brow, as though he were inspired, as in answer to her simple, but opportune questions, he told of the wonders of the northern wilds and the western ocean, and related those almost incredible achievements which had made his name honoured and feared throughout the known world.

Alethè was interested, as a girl of her age would more especially be by his narrative. And Prince Reginald began to feel uneasy. He concluded the meal, therefore, rather abruptly, and drew off the whole body of cavaliers, leaving the princess and her maidens to those girlish sports which had on previous occasions occupied the greater part of the birthday. At the appointed time all again met for refreshment, and on this occasion Sir Eustace sat by Alethè, and Sir Edred opposite. This was as the prince wished it, and, rising in high good humour, he proposed that the knights should escort the ladies to a beautiful spot at some distance, then separate as before, and all meet at the Birthday Knoll at half an hour before sunset. Sir Reginald, however, made sure of the young guests by inviting them to accompany him to the intended scene of a future hunt, whilst the main body of his knights halted at a respectful distance from their mistress, and small bodies of two or three rode about in different directions.

At length the declining sun warned the whole party that it was high time to retrace their steps. All had, however, so much enjoyed themselves—the prince had been so very anxious to execute his stratagem, and the princess felt so loath to conclude the last day of her girlhood—that the sun had already neared the horizon ere the whole party had reached the place of rendezvous. Alethè paused, and almost involuntarily turned her eyes to the break in the mountains, whence she had that morning beheld the sun arise in all his youthful splendour. She looked intently; for his setting beam shone with a bright, and, as it seemed to her, a

lurid light upon the object asserted by Sir Edred to be the castle of Schreckenstein.

She had not, however, gazed long, when her uncle's voice announced that all was ready. The party formed, with the princess at their head, and had just commenced their return, in good order, when the alarm was given that their path was beset.

"And who dares beset my path," said the Princess Alethè, "within a few miles of my father's dwelling?"

A stranger now came forward. His visor entirely concealed his countenance. His form was tall and robust, considerably exceeding the common height and size of men; his steed, though by no means handsome, being sandy-coloured, with black mane and white hoofs, was of a powerful make; and the whole appearance, both of man and beast, betokened strength and determination.

"Sir Hildebrand, of Schreckenstein," said he, addressing the princess, "has sent me to beseech, in his name, your heart and hand. And he has deputed this gallant company to act as your escort through the perilous wilds of the Forest of Idruna."

"He who seeks my hand," replied the princess, "must seek it from my father—must seek it in person."

"Nay, gentle ladye! but thy father is of a morose and selfish disposition, and might not feel disposed to part with such a treasure; therefore, beautiful princess, has my master sent me to bring thee to him with all speed. Wherefore I pray thee to accompany me without more ado; since if thou decline to do so willingly, thou shalt do so against thy will; and if these valiant knights make any show of resistance, the carrion birds shall have a rich repast to-morrow in honour of thy birthday and thy wedding, lovely one."

Alethè calmly, though indignantly, desired the envoy to depart; and Sir Reginald, placing the ladies in the midst, and the princess in the centre of all, determined to cut his way through the opposing force. He soon found that the enemy far outnumbered his own troop. Nothing daunted, however, he made a bold charge, and so great was the effect of his lances and of the compact mode in which the whole band was arrayed, that the numbers were almost equalised, though several of his braver knights had fallen and others were severely wounded. A furious sword-fight now commenced, in which Sir Reginald, despite of his great age, nobly vindicated the fame which he had acquired near fifty years before when fighting against the Moslem in the armies of the Byzantine empire. Sir Edred carried dismay and destruction wherever he came, and Sir Eustace proved himself as invincible as youth, strength, and skill must ever be when inspired by dauntless courage and ennobled by high feeling and high principle.

The princess, seeing how matters stood, resolved to make a bold stroke for freedom, and putting her palfrey to full gallop, burst through the combatants, followed by the most venturous of her train.

This heroic manœuvre, however, though at first successful, seemed likely to be unavailing. For the leader of the assailants having felled Sir Reginald with a heavy blow, and in a most unknightly manner inflicted a mortal wound on Sir Edred's steed, galloped after the princess, reached her, dragged her brutally from her palfrey, and placing her like a child across his saddlebow, dashed down an easterly glade, and made the best of his way towards the Castle of Schreckenstein. The princess

shrieked loudly, but her cries became every moment less and less audible to her friends, none of whom had succeeded in following her, save the Knight of the Golden Eagle, who, mounted on a charger of extreme fleetness, continually gained on her pursuer, and called upon him to turn and defend himself. His loudly vociferated challenge attracted the notice of two of the Schreckenstein troop who chanced to be near at hand, and springing through the bushes they placed themselves between their leader and Sir Eustace. Following the base example of their commander, they immediately disabled the noble charger, and the princess saw Sir Eustace fall to the ground, and every hope of rescue depart. It is true, she heard the trumpets of her father's power advancing rapidly to her rescue, and knew that the Lady Alice must have reached Arlstadt in safety, and given the alarm. But of what avail is succour that comes too late?—every moment the distance was increasing, the shades of night were deepening, and the bushes on either side growing denser and denser. And yet, even then, the soft fragrant breeze, that gently moved the roses o'er her head, seemed to breath comfort to her soul. But no! there can be no hope—through the close bushes she sees an open glade beyond, and another troop of miscreants halted ready to receive her.

At this instant the thicket seemed stirred as by a hurricane; and one of the largest and tallest bushes rapidly descending, struck the charger in front, and brought both horse and rider to the ground.

"Nay, fair maiden, but thou shalt not thus escape me," cried her captor, as Alethè, released for a moment from his clutch, sprang to her feet. His hand seized her mantle—she struggled vainly to free herself—and the sound of horsehoofs from the eastward told her that all hope was passed, when a loud howl resounded through the brake, and a bloodhound, of great size and beauty, sprang at his throat. Another moment and he was on the ground, powerless in the grasp of his invincible antagonist.

Alethè looked round—hard by she perceived an opening in the thicket; and no sooner had she entered it than the bushes—they were rose-bushes—closed behind her, so as to present to the pursuers an impervious barrier; and in another moment the noble dog was by her side looking up into her face with an expression of the deepest gratitude.

Soon sounded in her ears the clash of arms—then came the shouts of the pursuers and the cries of the pursued—and then, above all other sounds, arose the voice of her father calling for his daughter. As he reached the spot where the hostile leader had fallen, a gentle breeze lifted the boughs of the thicket where she had been sheltered, and showed her reclining on a mossy bank, with the bloodhound beside her.

The four-footed hero did not wait to hear his praises sounded by her lovely lips, but bounding through a gap in the bushes disappeared at once and for ever. The king clasped his child in his arms, and, escorted by a goodly retinue, amongst whom she rejoiced to see, apparently uninjured, her uncle and the two young strangers, the princess returned to her father's palace.

Chapter III.

THE VISION.

On reaching the palace, Alethè was welcomed by her female train, and especially by Alice, whose courage and presence of mind were lauded by the whole court, and most of all by her fondly attached mistress. She sought at once her own apartments, and having despatched her toilet as

quickly as possible, took the soothing draught which the royal physician had prepared, and soon fell into a deep slumber. It seemed, however, to be a troubled one; and yet, from the smile that often played upon her features, it would appear to have been not altogether painful. Alice, who lay awake for some time after the princess had fallen asleep, observed these symptoms, and with some pressing prevailed upon her mistress to make the following confession:—

"It seemed to me," said Alethè, "that no sooner had I laid my head upon my pillow, and closed my weary eyes to sleep, than a sound of distant music reached me, borne by a gentle breeze that mingled the rustling of boughs and the purling of brooks with its silvery tones. Nearer and nearer the harmony approached; though it seemed rather like self-born music wafted on the wings of the wind than the production of any minstrel of earth. Slowly and sweetly the waves of sound drew nearer, and as the melody became clearer, I was conscious of a delicious scent; till, at length, the air around me was filled at once with music and fragrance. So fatigued, however, did I feel with the day's toils and perils, that even in my dream I declined to open my eyes until the floating sounds moulded themselves into words."

It was with great difficulty, and after much solicitation from the Lady Alice, and much blushing on her own part, that the princess at length was prevailed upon to repeat the following verses:—

"'Unheard be the sob, and unbreath'd be the sigh,
For the Queen of the Roses she cometh to bless;
And wherever our Rosabel deigns to draw nigh,
Who can think of aught else but her loveliness?

"'Sweet Rosabel dwells in the wild wood alone,
Alone in her fragrance, alone in her bloom,
And the wild flowers are kneeling around her throne,
Her smile their reward, and her coldness their doom.

"'The purple Violet kneeleth there,
And so doth the Cowslip of downcast eye,
And the quiet Primrose frank and fair,
Which the moss encircles so lovingly.

"'And the Windflower trembles with conscious love,
And the Daisy discloses her sinless gold,
And the Woodbine bends from her bower above,
And the Clematis meekly looks forth from the wold.

"'And the Brione stretches her slender arms,
And the Speedwell laughs with his bright blue eye,
And the Orchis glows in conscious charms,
And the Wildgrass breathes its silvery sigh.

"'And the Hawthorn smiles his dazzling smile,
And calmly muses the Asphodel,
But smiling or sighing, they, all the while,
Are all of them thinking of Rosabel.

"'For she is the Queen of the Forest Flowers,
And they joyfully bow at their Sovereign's throne;
As thou art the Star of these earthly bowers,
Whose sceptre all eyes and all hearts shall own.

"'Then open thy matchless eyes, sweet maid,
Her equal alone in thy loveliness,—
For she whom thou savedst in yonder glade,
The Queen of the Roses, she cometh to bless.

"'She cometh to bless her Sister dear,
And happy the maiden by Rosabel blest,
For myriads of vassals are ever near
To study her wish, and perform her behest.'

"Thus urged," proceeded Alethè, "I opened my eyes, and beheld a sight which will ever remain vividly impressed on my memory, though I can scarcely give you the faintest idea of it in words. The whole room seemed filled with waves of light, some of them of the hue of the violet, others that of the honeysuckle, others were of a bright green colour, like budding leaves, others of a deeper hue, others again golden, others silvery, and others assuming the various shades of the rose, from the faint hue of the maiden's blush to the deepest damask. All of these waves appeared full of fragrance, and as the breezes stirred them they each gave forth the sweetest sounds conceivable; now rising into a silvery cadence of deep and wizard harmony, now dying away again into almost silence,—and yet it was not silence, one felt the presence of music though one could not hear it.

"I gazed for some time bewildered on the beautiful scene, unable to decide whether it were fancy or reality that moulded the waves before me, now into flowers, and now into angel forms of more than human loveliness.

"At length a soft voice close to me uttered the word 'Sister;' and looking up I beheld a form, such as no waking eye was ever blest with contemplating. She reminded me of the description which that young Greek harper gave of the Goddess Aphroditè,—only that she was far more beautiful, and there seemed to be such a purity as well as grace in every movement of her person, or tone of her voice, that I could almost have fallen down and worshipped her.

"'Maiden,' said she, 'I am the Rose Queen. I come to return you my deepest thanks for the service which you rendered to me this morning; to warn you of coming evil; and to assure you that whenever you are in need of assistance, you shall receive it at my hands; or—or——' here her voice faltered.

"'Or at mine,' said a voice of equal melody and of deeper tone. And, as I looked in the direction whence the sound came, I beheld a slender figure in male attire, holding in his hand that which I should have taken for a lance, had it not been so slight.

"'True,' said the Rose Queen; 'Sir Faramond of the Red, Red Rose will undertake to do battle for you against any denizen of earth or air.'

"'Ay, or of the lower deep either,' added he.

"'He will undertake to do battle for you against all comers, should you ever require his aid; and, powerful and beautiful as you are, you may require it. The clouds even now are darkening around you. Beware! Beware of Schreckenstein! Beware of Edred! Beware even of your uncle, *if he ceases to be himself.* Trust Eustace, the noble knight, and Arnold, the minstrel of the Brocken.'

"'Your words are mysterious,' I replied. 'Can you not speak more plainly?'

"'No; it is not permitted.'

"'At least tell me who and what you are.'

"'I am one of the most powerful of those spirits who resemble the angels in many points, yet who resemble man in these three things:—We are not perfect; we are in a state of probation; and we are (under certain circumstances) subject to death. I and my race rule over the flowers of the forest. Sometimes we manifest ourselves in the loveliest of hem. In fact, during the greater part of the year, from sunrise to

sunset, or as long as the flower is naturally awake, we each reside in that flower which is especially under our charge. When it closes, or the sun descends below the horizon, we depart, and either float through the air in waves of fragrant melody, or assume those human forms in which a great portion of our existence is passed. The sylvan retreats which we occupy when animating our chosen flowers are rendered supernaturally obscure to the sight, or impervious to the access of man, except on certain stated occasions, when we are open to approach, and liable to destruction. One of these occasions occurred to-day; and it is only to your gentle kindness that I owe my prolonged life.'

"'Nay, not only to me; the noble bloodhound kept the intruder at bay till I arrived. And now it bethinks me I owe my own escape to his courage and opportune assistance. Pray, whither is he gone?'

"'He is here,' said Sir Faramond. 'The lovely Rosabel forgot, in enumerating those points in which our nature agrees with that of man, to mention the most striking of all—namely, *love*. I, though no spirit of the forest flowers, but sprung from a sterner race, am a devoted adorer of the Rose Queen.'

"The beautiful being whom he had mentioned seemed abashed by the words of her admirer, and, turning her beaming countenance on me, said,

"'Farewell, my sister—my sweet sister; and let the events of this day impress upon you, that the Great Father of all Spirits, embodied or disembodied, will never allow the slightest act, or word, or thought of kindness towards any of his creatures to go unrewarded, even in the troubled and murky vale of this world. Love is the universal law of the universe. Happy and wise are they who fulfil it, even in the faintest degree; happiest and wisest they who bear its impress clearly written on their heart. But it is time to depart. Whenever you are in trial or trouble, seek my bower; it will always be accessible to you, provided you bring this in your bosom.' And the Rose Queen laid a beautiful rose upon my pillow.

"And here it is!" cried Alice, pointing to the rose as she spoke.

And there it was, sure enough, looking more beautiful than any rose ever did look, excepting always the Rose Queen herself.

"It was no dream, then," said Alethè.

PESTILENCE AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION FOR 1851.*

"FOREWARNED, forearmed," is the appropriate motto adopted by the author of a pamphlet, which expounds that without preparations being made for the sanitary accommodation of the multitude of strangers who may be expected to attend the Great Exhibition of 1851, there will be great danger of some baneful illness breaking out. The author addresses himself to the Prince Consort, as the prime originator of the forthcoming Grand Exhibition, and he says—

You are known to be well versed in history, let History therefore speak to you. Hear her voice, and consider us, as in fact we nearly are, past and forgotten. Please to observe, while men and matter are ever undergoing change, the laws of nature are immutable. And this is one of her great laws, verified by the con-

* The Philosopher's Mite to the Great Exhibition of 1851. Houlston and Stoneman.

cordant testimony of all ages throughout the world,—"Great, sudden human gatherings, domiciliated in a confined space, are liable to be followed by pestilence in the compound ratio of the diversity of the sources from whence they come, the diversity of breed, habits, and diet, and the length of their sojourn in such given confined space—a liability scarcely to be obviated at all if such accumulation be protracted, and, even if continuing for a few weeks, demanding special regulations for the public health."

It would be a mere senseless display of book-knowledge were we to refer you to the hundreds of instances of pestilence accruing upon great international meetings. Take up what history you like; choose any quarter of the globe, any *siècle*, any nation, any metropolis, any great city, and still the fact will encounter you. You have near you good and truly learned men, who will refer you to the historic proofs that the most widely-spreading and most exterminating pestilences of Great Britain followed upon, and were traceable to, sudden and enormous influx of foreigners. But if you will judge for yourself, read the reign of Edward III., and there you will trace the tragic consequences of such influx at the founding of the Order of the Garter. What followed at Windsor? The Black Death, the early history of which is still the subject of intense curiosity among the learned, and has been, within the last few years, reprinted both in Germany and in England. That freak of Edward cost England more than a third of its population.

Again, in 1483, Richmond brought with him, to deliver his country from a so-called tyrant, a motley army of aliens, and thus introduced the Sweating Sickness, developed in the invading army soon after their landing at Milford Haven. In some towns one-half of the population perished by it. If the work of the learned Caius, the founder of Caius College, be too professional for your perusal, you will find that my Lord Bacon, at a subsequent period, embodied an account of it in his great work.

Will you go with us to the East? What have been the consequences of the great Oriental sacred gatherings in that quarter? Please to ask your East India Company how many thousands of deaths by malignant disease were traceable to such national meetings? For Italy, in the mediæval ages, the records of the Medici will suffice. You will there learn how frequently the pest recurred from accidental and forced collections of people, driven from one city to another by the calamities of war; so frequently, indeed, that the mere contingency of approaching risk prompted authority to shut the city gates, and with them the gates of mercy, on their fellow-creatures. And here, Prince, we tremble, while hastily flit before our memory the names of great and good men who were execrated, defamed, nay worse, murdered, because a mob will always concentrate their rage on individuals and stupidity personify the cause of pestilence, instead of tracing it to its complex origin, for which they have not the mind or the patience. Even kings have thus been maligned, and found Homers to immortalise the error. This makes us tremble for your popularity. Is it well emerited? What matters? Does not history tell you, that a shadow of a pretence suffices for mob etiology? Search the archives of your fatherland. Do you not call to mind that influx of invaders brought with it pestilence? Thank God! the English are only going to be visited, and not invaded. But does Nature, in her above-recited law, make any exceptions? Does she except those brought together from distant parts to join in the praise of the Deity or in the defence of religion? Ask History again, and she will answer you. Whether of yore, in the temple of Solomon, or in our own time, on the plains of Hindostan, such popular collections, ever found to be dangerous, have demanded classification and division by the Jews in the one instance, and secured the intervention of the Indian Company in the other.

The piety of the good St Louis availed not to save him and a great part of his army from a similar catastrophe. Surely men are not so insensate as to expect an immunity from a law which is not allowed to be inoperative, even when too many are gathered together in His name, as Christian history also suffices to show, and as has been exemplified even in our own time in various parts of Europe? If you dislike to read medical authors, turn to Froissart. If you require modern documents for modern calamities, you can have them from your India House, from your Board of Control, from your Army and Navy Medical Boards. That the sun shines at mid-day is not clearer to our minds than the embryo danger of your monster Exhibition, however noble that monster is intended to be. It is that same law which influenced the introduction of the pestilence of 1483, 1485, 1506, 1517, 1528, 1529—a law as clearly definable as that two multiplied by two make four. It is notable that the second recurrence here cited took place just two years after

all England had offered up prayers and thanksgivings for the withdrawal of what has ever been considered a divine scourge, and just at the period when the short-sighted wisdom of the learned had led them to infer that the calamities of the past were the best guarantee against the danger of the future. The same law influenced the introduction of the plague in 1665; for both restorations brought with them a motley influx of foreigners. Whether moved by the consideration of the jealousy which might accrue from the presence of an army of foreigners, or struck by the repeated examples of pest occurring in his own time, arising out of a contingent *plus* population, that wise and sagacious monarch, Henry IV., dismissed with largess all his alien supporters, and thanking them warmly for the services they had rendered him, remitted them to their vessels at Plymouth, to sail from thence to Brittany,—not allowing them to await either the issue of his contest with Richard, or for his own coronation contingent upon the deposal of that monarch.

All well-informed men are aware that those heavy visitations of ancient times were traceable, like cholera, as coming from Asia; but it is equally notorious, that when international intercourse was limited, throughout four outbreaks, Germany and the Netherlands were exempt, while at the fifth, in these last countries, pest developed itself at the great conference at Marpurgh, between Luther and Zuinglius, on transubstantiation,—a curious omen for the present religious tendencies of England.

The author then goes on to show how the centralisation of large armies, and even common assizes have, by the excessive *animalisation* of houses not capacious enough for their ordinary and contingent inhabitants, been the means of exciting sudden outbreaks. He then considers the habits of foreigners visiting London. How they congregate in the purlieus of Leicester-square, where the cupidity of lodging-house keepers induces them to receive an overplus. Upwards of threescore foreigners, he tells us, have been known to lodge, or rather to bundle, in one house in Castle-street, three in a bed. And then he asks—

What number of visitors, may we be allowed to ask, does your Committee expect? We have heard of 40,000. We have heard of 100,000. We have heard of a million. And we think the last a nearer approximation to the probable truth. Patriotism has attracted great bodies of men to her altars. Religious enthusiasm more. But the incentive now held up to the world, if philosophers have understood human nature, will prove that the worshippers of Mammon exceed all the other worshippers on the face of the earth. Tournaments and glory have had their altars in the open air, and have allured their thousands; but this is the age of Mammon, and its votaries will be countless,—their name Legion. Your fine mind has been too severely schooled in philosophy to be swayed by an argument unsupported by facts. Please to observe a whole group of such facts in the according testimony of all nations.

Our philosopher shows that the severest distempers of an epidemical character have travelled from Asia, and that the most violent outbreaks of cholera have arisen from undue and accidental crowdings. And he not only avers that monster collections of masses in confined space, especially when derived from various and distant sources, are commonly found to bring with them all the heterodox materials necessary for pestilential development, in that mystic caldron of human calamity, an overgrown metropolis; but he also says that wise men of all nations have pronounced that every gigantic scheme for human improvement has encountered dire reverses, never contemplated by the benevolent originators. Without going so far as the learned and clever author, and placing much reliance upon untoward coincidences which would seem *à priori* to call into question the benevolence of Providence, we must say that there are statements and arguments in his pamphlet which claim serious attention, and that with him we say, "Forewarned, forearmed."

THE CONFEDERATES; OR, THE DAYS OF MARGARET OF PARMA.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Chapter XIX.

Loud and prolonged peals of laughter rose in noisy chorus to the dark oak ceiling of the banqueting hall of the palace of Cuylemberg. More than three hundred guests sat at the long, narrow tables ranged round the hall, which was of loftier, and more roomy dimensions than common even in those days. The heavy silver tankards overflowed with the richest and rarest wines. Malvoisy and Cyprus glittered in slender Venetian glasses, whilst in armoriated goblets the ruby vintage of France rivalled the golden tribute of the Rhine. The sumptuous repast was drawing to a close, and the menials had been dismissed, that nothing might check the free flow of hilarity and the unguarded license of the hour.

The eyes of the young men who, for the most part, composed this assembly, were lighted up with an unnatural fire, and their cheeks tinged with a ruddier glow than ever was bestowed by health; but the formidable display of empty wine flasks, piled at intervals between the guests, sufficiently accounted for these appearances. Those among the revellers who had reached the meridian of life—except a few Protestants, whose stern countenances spoke of the struggles for which they were preparing, and others whose names and positions were sufficient to give dignity to any cause they embraced—were men on whose harsh and worn countenances disappointment and debauch had left indelible traces. The majority, however, seemed thoughtless and headlong youths, whose chief delight was the wine-flask, whose chief aim to spend as quickly as possible the surplus of vitality that overfilled their veins.

Florent of Cuylemberg and Louis of Nassau sat on either hand of Brederode; and though two of them at least had passed the rubicon of youth, yet their enjoyment of the passing hour seemed as keen and as careless as that of any there present; but an observing eye might have perceived that, under the appearance of levity, the looks of Brederode were occasionally overcast, and that Louis of Nassau could at times with difficulty repress an abstraction very foreign to his nature. The Count of Cuylemberg alone of the three seemed to enter freely, and without secondary motives or thought, into the pleasures of the moment.

The conversation had hitherto followed the routine of all such meetings; it was now fast reaching a point where mirth was in danger of becoming madness—patriotism a devouring flame—where the most cowardly feel themselves lions, the most hard-hearted have to combat their overflowing sensibilities, the most reserved become loquacious. In short, all were suffering, more or less, under an incipient inebriety which, acting upon diverse natures and temperaments, promised soon to close the eyes of some, and extinguish the few remaining sparks of reason in others.

Towards the middle of one of the tables we have described, a group was eagerly conversing; for they yet maintained sufficient control over themselves to listen to the observations of each other—a ceremony, as the

din around proclaimed, deemed altogether superfluous by many. In the centre of this group sat one of a peculiarly expressive aspect. His erect bearing and air of command, as well as the abruptness of his manners, betrayed the soldier; but there was in his countenance a look of unmitigated austerity, that conveyed a conviction of his tenets to the mind, even before his name had justified it.

"None can fully appreciate the extraordinary qualities of the Prince of Orange," he was saying, whilst his untouched goblet, filled to the brim, was slightly compressed by his fingers, as if mechanically, "but those who like me have the honour and pleasure of being constantly thrown into his society, and of living within the circle of his hospitality."

"Is not he who is now speaking," whispered a gaudily dressed gentleman, whose profusion of pinking and slashing made him not unlike a stuffed parrot—"is not he who is now speaking, John Marnix, Lord of Thoulouse, the rank heretic, who conceives himself equally master of the pen and of the sword, and plays by turns the soldier and the man of letters?"

"The same," answered the person interrogated. "He resides at Breda, in the midst of a nest of heretics like himself, all men of erudition, of whom, by the way, many are here to-day. But hark! he speaks."

"None," continued Thoulouse, "knows better how to win the hearts of all that come within his sphere. It were difficult to say whether his free and princely generosity, or his affability, weigh most in the scale of public esteem."

"Certainly none in the Netherlands," said Eustache Fiennes, Baron d'Esquedra, "can equal the prince in magnificence; even in Brussels the splendour of his establishment and retinue, the pomp and state that surround him, excite, it is said, the jealousy of the regent and the court of Spain; and yet I have heard it confidently asserted that it is nothing compared with what he displays at Breda."

"He holds there *cour plénière*, does he not?" inquired another; "and plays the independent sovereign?"

"He is one," replied Thoulouse, proudly.

"How so?" pursued the same interlocutor. "He is vassal to the emperor for his county of Nassau."

"True," rejoined Marnix; "but his principality of Orange in France is free—there he owes fealty to none."

"Yes," observed a fourth, laughing; "but his freedom in that quarter lies somewhat too near Avignon and France for my taste. The first quarrel, and his principality is packed up in a trice—he cannot defend it."

"He would sacrifice that and more besides for the sake of our rights," said Thoulouse, warmly. "He is a right noble and wise prince, and happy are the lands that owe allegiance to him alone."

"Amen!" responded several in the vicinity of the speakers, and enthusiastic were the shouts with which the health of Orange was drunk, as the toast went round.

"Whom are they drinking up there?" inquired a voice from the next table. "Is it the noble Count of Egmont? Faith, I have been in the camp with him, and have seen him face the jaunty Frenchmen. He took the starch out of their ruffs, I promise you. I was with him at St. Quentin, and a prettier affair I never wish to see."

"I hear them shouting the name of the Prince of Orange," said

another; "but I am all for native heroes. What need have we to cry up so high those whose roots were planted in another soil? Come! let us drink the toast our forefathers drank. 'May the three great houses bloom and flourish for ever—Egmont, the rich; Wassenaer, the old; and Brederode, the noble!'"

Deafening were the clamours with which this popular saying in the Netherlands was received by the assembled nobles, among whom it passed like wildfire, until the beloved names had been duly honoured. At the extremity of the table sat several rakish-looking youths, who either could not catch, or did not understand, what was going forward.

"What on earth are they saying, Florent?" said one, who could scarcely have closed his twentieth year, to one somewhat older than himself, who was straining every muscle to look steady, and endeavouring, though in vain, to obtain a distinct view of his neighbour, and a clear comprehension of what was passing around him.

"Really, I can't tell," he gravely answered. "I can't distinguish. The ship rocks so confoundedly—one can't—the waves are so yellow and thick"—he gazed wistfully as he spoke into a large goblet of Rhenish that stood before him—"so very thick, that one grows quite dizzy."

"Ha! ha! ha! he's gone—clean gone. Poor Florent! He can stand nothing!" shouted another youth by his side. "Now, here am I, at the close of a feast as at the beginning. I'll give you a proof—I'll tell you how much I owe to the Jews to a hair's breadth."

"That's easily done," said a third, laughing; "say everything, and more than you ever possessed, and you'll not be far wrong."

"Do you mean to insult me?" demanded he who had given rise to this retort, and who appeared to have arrived at the quarrelling stage; "if so, I'd have you to know I'm as good a hand at a sword-cut as any man, and by 'r Lady—I—I——"

"Sit down and be quiet, can't you?" interrupted a fourth. "Don't you see that I can't tell my adventures in France, if you make such a noise?"

"Who wishes to hear them?" growled the angry man. "I tell you, the strings of pearls my mother left me, that I used to wear round my bonnet, were worth—were worth—let me see——"

"As much as your acres every bit, I'll be bound," returned the other; "and the weight of either would not encumber a flea's back."

Upon this the ruined gentleman grew outrageous, and would have vented his fury in deeds as well as words, had not the unsteadiness of his limbs, as well as the interference of his friends, prevented him. In the mean time the fourth speaker continued vaunting of the things he had seen at the court of France, at the height of his voice.

"Yes, by our Lady of Hanap! no country can match France. She boasts the loveliest queen and the merriest jester that ever were beheld: and I don't know which did me the most good when I went to Paris, the smiles of the enchanting Mary of Scotland, or the hearty laugh that Brusquet—that half-knave, half-fool—cost me. The queen, one day, invited no end—no end——"

"Pray make an end to that stupid story of yours; don't you see I want to tell——"

"No end," continued the unabashed speaker, "of noblemen and

gentlemen to sup with her; and—and—and—for you know he is postmaster-general of France——"

"Who?—the queen or Brusquet?" interrupted one.

"The queen, of course," explained another.

"All—all the footmen," continued he; "behind the chairs were postilions in disguise, and trumpeted them deaf with the horns they had concealed under their vests—and the pies were made of old leather—the cast-off harness and saddles of the posters, cut small and hacked, and disguised with spices, and sauces, and—'*Sacré Dieu!*' she said——"

"Who—Brusquet or the queen?" asked several, laughing.

"By my fay!" said one, "it is a good story and a good joke, be it who it may—ha! ha! Let us drink, to settle the matter."

"The queen, or Brusquet?" continued the narrator, regarding his interrogators with a stolid look—it is not clear; but I have no doubt the mystery will be unravelled when—when——"

"When you are sober," observed a laughing neighbour.

"Sober! sober! ne'er more sober in my life," was the reply, accompanied with a courteous inclination of the head, and a grave, meaning smile, which raised shouts of laughter around. "Try me—I entreat you to try. I can tell all my genealogy, from one end to another, without a fault."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed a young nobleman, putting forth a hand, every finger of which was laden with a jewel. "What is the stone in my thumb-ring? Tell me that, if you are sober."

"That's a good one. But hold it nearer—let me see. The light is so indifferent; and there is such a confounded noise."

"Ha! ha! an excellent reason, that last, for not seeing clear."

"It is—it is a turquoise. Yes—give it to me—there," said the inebriated gentleman, holding the ring deliberately between his forefinger and thumb, and winking at it very sagely. Yes; it is a turquoise—as blue as the skies, or as the eyes of the Madonna. I declare, gentlemen, it is blue, and a turquoise. No! no! it is not that either—no, on closer inspection, I see it clearly—oh! it is palpable—the stone is red—glowing red! It is a ruby, by St. Andrew! the patron of the Order I shall never belong to—it is a rare and rich ruby—of as great price as the kiss of beauty. Most lovely ruby!—but, no—you need not laugh, gentlemen; I retract in time—I do, honourably, like a knight and a noble. It is—let me see—yes—it is an emerald—green and brilliant, like the serpent's eye—glittering and deep as the waves of the sea. A beautiful stone, by my fay! and well worth, like the best pearl of Fernando Cortez, being kept for a fair bride, whenever I chance to get one."

"You had better keep your eye upon him, whispered Launcelot de Brederode (a natural son of Count Henry) to the owner of the ring, who was no other than Arkel, "or he will certainly pocket the stone. I have known worse jokes pass at a banquet before now."

"Thank you for the warning," returned Arkel, in the same under tone; "I will take care."

The orator, delighted to perceive that he drew upon himself general attention, continued his rhapsody.

"You wish me, messire, to return you this—this exquisite jewel—this pearl, as I was saying, beyond all price; but you are mistaken, messire, strangely mistaken—you misname it in calling it a pearl—it is a

diamond, fit only for a king's crown—a dewdrop on a flower, as the rhymer has it. Gentlemen, who knows the song?"

"Give me back my dewdrop, or whatever you please to call it," said Arkel, somewhat impatiently; "it is a heirloom, and I was wrong to toy with it at all."

After some gentle insistance, the ring, which was of great value in many respects, was restored to its owner. It was a star-sapphire, of the purest water and large size; a gem not only highly esteemed in jewellery at that epoch, but to which superstition and romance attached the belief of supernatural properties.

"Why, Launcelot, how is this?" exclaimed Charles Mansfeldt, son of Count Ernest, who, at the earlier part of the banquet, had sat higher up the table, but who now joined his friend. "Whom have you got among you? Lamoral, as I live! I thought you told me positively that your father had advised him not to remain in Brussels, and that he had departed accordingly."

"And so he had," replied young Brederode; "at least so I believe; but here he is, as you see, as merry as any of us, and right merry are we all, I can assure you. I am ready, for a wager, to ride like the wind through the streets with Conrad Van der Noot, back to back on the same horse, and that, too, with our barrets turned inside out; we have done it before now."

"And may do so again, Launcelot, if you please," returned Mansfeldt, laughing good-naturedly, "but you must not expect me to be a party to your frolic."

"You are so horridly tame, Charles," said Launcelot, shrugging his shoulders disdainfully; "you will not, forsooth, enter frankly into a jest, and yet you enjoy one, after a sly fashion of your own, at a distance. You'll stick in purgatory, Charles—you'll never get beyond."

"If I avoid sinking lower," said Mansfeldt, "that will, at least, be something in my favour. But you and the brothers Van der Noot are wild *junckers;* your heads, I fear, are not very steady on your shoulders."

"As for that matter," replied Launcelot, "there are not many here at this moment can boast of so great an advantage."

"I hope you don't mean this as an omen," said Cornelius Van der Noot, the younger brother, whose wild countenance, inflamed with wine, harmonised strangely with the tones of a voice almost sepulchral.

"God grant it may not be one!" said Charles Mansfeldt, whose hilarity was damped by this passing observation. "That was a strange thought of yours, messire."

"Yes," said Cornelius Van der Noot, who grew more melancholy and desponding with every additional glass. "Who can tell how many here present shall die before a few, very few, short years are over! or what death we may die! When I gaze around me, I almost fancy this hall a funeral vault, and that I see skulls grinning at me from under these barrets for all their tinsel ornaments and gay feathers!"

"For our Lady's sake, don't let him proceed thus, Launcelot," said Mansfeldt; "he will sing us the service for the dead in a few minutes."

"That he will," said Launcelot; "what raises the hearts of others, makes him as heavy as lead. But he'll soon fall asleep, that's one comfort!"

"Ha! a well-timed interruption," exclaimed Conrad Van der Noot. "Here comes the Spaniard I told you of, Launcelot, who sings like a nightingale; he is full of life and spirit, and will make us as merry as birds, if he but chooses either to talk or sing. But he is capricious and variable."

"A Spaniard!" said Mansfeldt. "Is that prudent? Is it right?"

"Oh! perfectly safe, on my word," replied young Brederode. "I know him well—he is heart and soul our own; and between you and I, he has already proved himself useful and trustworthy to many of us."

"That is to say, he has lent money to the Van der Noots and to Launcelot over and over again," whispered another youngster in Mansfeldt's ear; "he has helped them out of many a scrape."

At that moment a form, whose plain burgher's garb contrasted strangely with the gay costumes around him, surpassing in manly grace every being, however distinguished, in that crowded hall, crossed, with a swift step, the short distance that intervened between the door and the table at which the youths were sitting. There might be in the quickness of his movement, and the haste with which the young men made way for him, a desire to reunite, as speedily as possible, in social enjoyment; but to Charles Mansfeldt's observing eye it had more the appearance of an anxiety to escape the notice of those who occupied the upper end of the room. He turned towards Arkel, who being precisely in the same situation as himself in every respect, was the person there with whom he felt he could most sympathise. They had been more moderate in their libations than the others, and had evidently preserved their faculties more unscathed. Arkel returned his gaze, and then fixed his eyes with amazement on the new comer. His surprise soon gave way to a mixed expression of curiosity and anxiety. The latter feeling communicated itself instantaneously to Mansfeldt; and he determined to watch narrowly the person thus introduced, doubtless for the first time, to such a circle. The stranger seemed, however, perfectly at his ease, until he became conscious of Arkel's gaze; then indeed a slight flush betrayed some symptom of recognition on his part, and an embarrassment came over him which did not escape Mansfeldt's observation; it was, however, but passing; he recovered himself almost instantly.

"Is it long since you left Antwerp?" asked Launcelot, nodding, in a most friendly manner.

"Only a few hours," replied the stranger. "I came in all haste upon your invitation."

"Well, well," said Launcelot, laughing away some slight confusion; for he remembered the invitation had been accompanied with, or rather was the herald of, certain demands of a very different nature, which he did not wish to hear alluded to at that moment. "You are come, and welcome. You are an enemy to the Inquisition, and, therefore, the friend of every one here present, although known to few; so here's a pledge to a better acquaintance with my worthy friend, Lopez Chievosa by name, by birth a Spaniard, Moor, Saracen, Turk—it matters not what."

"But it does matter," said the young Spaniard, haughtily; "to me, at least, if to none else."

But his health was drunk with such loud demonstrations of kindness by the offender himself and the brothers Van der Noot, that what he might have said was drowned in the increasing confusion. It was even

with the greatest difficulty that he freed himself of the somewhat inconvenient professions of the brothers, who, taking by main force each one of his long, thin, dark hands, swore that their friendship for him would last until the clouds should fall, and the world dissolve;—a declaration which brought tears of sensibility into the eyes of an old campaigner who sat not far off. The disorder and clamour among the young men, augmenting with every second, at length attracted the attention of the graver portion of the company forcibly towards that quarter.

"Messire de Barlaymont may look and talk as disdainfully as he pleases," said Count Henry de Brederode, looking with a smile of satisfaction on the scene of unbounded revelry which the crowded hall displayed. "If we are but *des Gueux*,* as he pleased to call us but this morning, we are merry ones at least. Had each here present his own, many of us would be richer than he."

"But how was that?" exclaimed several voices at a time. "When—where did Barlaymont apply so vile an epithet to us?"

"I and many others overheard it," said Brederode. "Yesterday, as I was handing the petition to the princess."

"How came Barlaymont to be there?" demanded Berghe, who had not arrived in time to join the confederates at the presentation. "Tell me, I pray."

"The council was but just over when we were admitted into the presence, as I have already told you. Many of the councillors had remained by the regent, among whom, of course, the President Viglius and Count of Barlaymont were first. When the princess saw us enter with a self-possessed air, she became very pale, and turned to Barlaymont, as if for support. Upon which, we, who were nearest, distinctly overheard these words: 'Fear not, madam, they are but a pack of Gueux.' This he spoke in French."

"The insolent wretch!" exclaimed several voices, with angry vehemence.

"Never fear, gentlemen," said Louis of Nassau, "we will force the word down the villain's throat before the day is closed."

"I, on the contrary," said Brederode, "feel very much gratified by the epithet. Barlaymont has often taxed me with not belonging to the Order. Faith, I have not much inclination towards an assembly so few members of which have any bowels left for the mother that bore them—the land that gave them birth. If you think like me, my friends, we will form a new Order among ourselves—a new brotherhood; rendered necessary by the state of our country and our own position. We have gone too far to recede, our best chance of safety lies in going forward. He who retracts is lost; union makes the weakest strong. Yes! let us form a new Order. Heretofore, such have been inaugurated by princes; an afflicted people may, in their turn, create one for the holy purpose of maintaining their threatened liberties, their failing prosperity. Let the word pronounced in scorn by a proud upstart be our watchword! Let us redeem it from its base acceptation, and show that a patriotic self-devotion may ennoble all things, even the most lowly. Let us make the word ring from shore to shore, that the inland rivers may bear the tale to the sea, of the truth and constancy of the confederates. One day, perhaps, the cheek of Barlaymont may grow pale, as the word of scorn

* Beggars.

will sound like a coming tempest in his ear! We have long, in vain, sought a suitable name for our association; here it comes ready-coined to our hand. Gentlemen, have with me—*Vive les Gueux!*"

The speech of Brederode, who had risen to deliver it, had attracted and, towards its close, rivetted the attention of all. Although generally but a very indifferent speaker, his enunciation being naturally slow, hesitating, and often embarrassed and stammering, the wine, that had over-excited many, had only warmed him sufficiently to overcome all such impediments; and he delivered these words with an enthusiasm that won over many, even whilst it failed to convince. Those who surrounded Brederode repeated the toast with wild delight. The singularity of the name thus proposed for adoption agreed with the humour of the moment; it was received with general and rapturous consent, and none drank it with more fiery zeal than the youthful set of which Arkel and Charles Mansfeldt formed a part. When the prolonged and deafening shouts that accompanied this ebullition of feeling had somewhat subsided, Brederode again rose; silence reigned throughout, and the attention of all was fixed upon his movements. He produced a beggar's scrip (how he came by it never was explained), from whence he took a small wooden cup, such as beggars were in the habit of using. This he filled to the brim with the choicest wine, and holding it on high, he said:

"I care not if I become a beggar in the service of the king and this country; and here, over this cup, do I swear solemnly that I will stand by the confederates to the last, and that I will go unto death for the sake of each individually, as well as for all. Yes! I'll die rather than abandon a friend! *Vive les Gueux!*"

Enthusiastic cheers, that threw the former ones into shade, proclaimed the delight with which this additional toast was received. Cuylemberg, Louis of Nassau, the Counts of Berghem, St. Aldegonde, and De Montigny, John Sauvage, Seigneur d'Escaubêque, and others, each in turn, claimed the wooden cup—for Brederode had but touched it with his lips—and eagerly took the same oath, in clear, loud tones. By this time all stood up, and the cup passed from hand to hand, from lip to lip; whilst a hundred vows consecrated its brim. Eustache Fienne Esquedra, and John Marnix of Thoulouse, took the oath, in as calm and cheerful a voice as if the death they invoked were never to surprise them.

Many were outrageous in their zeal.

"Die!" exclaimed a portly gentleman, whose habits of intemperance had stamped his person with the visible marks of premature old age, "ay! a thousand million deaths for any of you, that I would. I'd be drawn by wild horses, quartered, hung, drowned, flayed alive, without wincing. I'll stake my soul on my courage; it is boiling in my veins, like molten lead! Hand me the cup. Here goes, the oath!"

"I lo-love every one of you like my born brother—father—mother—like my born wife!" exclaimed another. "Die for you!—to be sure I would—and will, that's more, if I have but the occasion!"

"King Philip will not, I suppose, deprive us of the opportunity long, if this reaches his ears," said Arkel, laughing, as the cup rapidly advanced towards the set among whom he was sitting.

The elder Van der Noot acquitted himself of his task with cheerful readiness, but Cornelius took the cup with a most gloomy and profoundly sagacious look, and holding it up, exclaimed, in a deep, hollow voice,

that formed a strange dissonance with the peals of laughter around him, "Die! to be sure we'll die—we may take our oaths of that. So, here goes! Death to all here present as speedily as possible, by land and by water!"

"Hush, hush!" said Chievosa, putting his hand before his mouth, and, taking the cup from him, he passed it rapidly to Lancelot de Brederode; for some gentlemen, on hearing these strange words, and unconscious probably of the source from whence they sprang, had already their hands on the hilts of their daggers. By this manœuvre he also avoided joining in the ceremony, which both Arkel and Charles de Mansfeldt observed. Lancelot, perceiving that the chance words of the more than half-besotted Van der Noot had somewhat checked the ardour of those on that side of the table, took the drained bowl, and replenished it, with the loudest and most extravagant demonstrations of enthusiasm, which again roused the spirits of the party within ear-shot.

When in his turn Arkel took the bowl, he hesitated slightly. He was quite alive to the serious import and binding nature of the oath, that might ultimately devote to a premature grave many of those who took it so lightly. He had hitherto treated the conspiracy as the toy of his dawning manhood; but this one rash act might turn it into his destiny. He had not prepared himself to view in so serious a light a matter in which he felt his heart was not very deeply engaged; nor did he feel justified, at one moment's warning, in taking a step so irrecoverable—a step upon which was cast honour, fame, and all that a man holds dear. It were much for one so young to refuse the pledge which so many older than himself had taken freely; but, although the generosity of his nature revolted against this self-seeking prudence, his hand was about to repulse the proffered cup, when Chievosa for the first time took direct notice of him.

"You have admirers and enthusiastic friends in Antwerp, my lord," said he, "who will scarcely believe me when I report it, how lukewarm are your feelings in a just cause. They fancy you daring and bold to a fault; but prudence is a fine virtue, especially in the young."

The sarcasm was spoken in a half-supercilious, half-mocking tone, that set Arkel's blood on fire. He would, probably from anger at the audacity of the young burgher, have decidedly refused the pledge, for he scorned to remind Chievosa that he too had avoided it; but Lancelot and others took up the ball. A few words from Charles Mansfeldt, which seemed to imply that although his father's displeasure was to the full as certain as Arkel's, he had not hesitated, appeared to determine his line of conduct; carried away by the embarrassment of the moment, and not sufficiently firm to maintain his will against the jibes of his neighbours, he gave way, and quaffed and vowed, as had the others, with the difference, that many more eyes were upon him than if he complied at once and without hesitation; he felt conscious, too, although he avoided looking directly at him, that a smile of scorn curled the lip of the Spaniard. Many of those who now performed the ceremony were incapable of understanding its meaning, and bitterly did Arkel regret that he had allowed the opportunity to escape, of giving a salutary example.

"Florent," said one of the younkers to him, whose delusion had taken so maritime a turn, "Florent! why don't you drink, and swear yourself a Gueux?"

"How can I," stuttered the woe-begone youth, attempting in vain to steady the hand that had grasped the cup; "how can I? Don't you hear how the wind whistles? how the ship racks? I can't stand—my head—my stomach—all suffer alike at sea—I never can bear it even in calm weather—this is a fearful storm. Ah!" he almost shrieked, as his trembling hand spilled the contents of the wooden goblet over his sadly disarranged finery, "the waves are coming over—we are drowned—all drowned—will no one save me?" he tottered and reeled as he spoke.

Lancelot refilled the goblet and forced it to his lips; but Arkel rose, and advancing with the dignity of one influenced by a just thought, he roughly pushed away the cup that Lancelot held, saying in loud, severe tones—

"I wonder, gentlemen, that you are not ashamed to urge a man perhaps to his ruin in this helpless state. He cannot even understand what is passing around him—I trust you are not in earnest in pressing this matter, for it is neither fair nor honourable."

"What do you mean by this reproach?" said Lancelot, fiercely, for his wrath was at all times easily roused. "*He shall* drink and swear, if I please."

"He *shall not!* I will not suffer it!" exclaimed Arkel, in as angry and haughty a tone, his lip actually quivering with the passion he endeavoured to suppress.

"He shall by ——," returned Lancelot, uttering an oath that was then much in vogue, though more familiar to roistering soldiers than to persons of gentle blood.

"By all my hopes of knighthood!" said Arkel, snatching the goblet from Lancelot's hands. He had not time to utter more, for Charles Mansfeldt sprang from his seat, and held back the infuriated young Brederode as he would have aimed a blow at his opponent.

"For God's sake, Lancelot," he whispered, "be quiet. What would your father say if he knew what folly and child's-play is going on here? And you, Lamoral, take care of Florent as quickly as you can: he is not fit to remain here."

Mansfeldt had touched the right chord. Arkel had not noticed the raised arm of young Brederode; and, as he turned to his *protégé*, all trace of anger vanished from his brow.

"Come, Florent," said he, "you are saved for once; come away with me."

"Whither?" inquired the unfortunate youth, leaning heavily on the arm of his protector as he led him slowly away. "Well, I owe you life, that's sure."

"You may have spoken a truer word, Florent, than you imagine," replied Arkel, who, without heeding the words of Lancelot de Brederode, "You'll pay me for this, Lamoral," reached the door and effected the safe exit of his companion.

By this time the wooden cup had returned to Count Henry de Brederode. He took it up with a great show of respect and veneration, and hung it up, as well as the scrip which had contained it, on the wall above the place where he sat. Immediately nails and hammers were called for, and the guests simultaneously rose. Those who could get at the means of so doing fixed a nail in the wall, in accordance with the action of

Brederode, in lieu of the scrip and cup with which, very beggars as many of them were in reality, they had not yet provided themselves.

The spirits of the company were running riot; reason was banished, and gaiety had far overstepped its boundaries, when the entrance of three new comers—chance visitors, it would seem—added another feature to the scene. An hour sooner their names would have excited respect, and imposed restraint on the major part of the company, but now the Prince of Orange and the Counts of Egmont and De Horn were received with shouts of rapture and deafening clamours. They had been dining with the Count Ernest of Mansfeldt, and on their way towards their homes entered the Palace of Cuylemberg, to ascertain if Louis of Nassau and Brederode were yet there. As the Prince of Orange gave this explanation of their appearance at that hour, a meaning glance passed between himself and his brother; but it was noticed by none. The confusion augmented with every instant, and Brederode now explained to the new comers what had passed, and begged them to pledge the *Gueux*.

The courtesy of that period hardly admitted of a refusal. All three drank "Vive les Gueux!" with every wish for their success. This condescension, which was considered, as well it might be, a signal mark of approbation, was received with the wildest expressions of joy. Glasses were shivered to atoms in every direction—jewelled barrets flew in the air, and fell in different parts of the room—some swore eternal friendship who had never met before—even the disputatious became amicable. There was a wringing of hands and felicitations to be seen and heard on all sides, as if a public benefit had suddenly fallen to their lot, and above all arose the incessant and wild chorus—"Vive les Gueux."

Of course, among the three hundred, all were not exalted beyond, or rather reduced below the boundaries of reason, but enthusiasm or feint filled up the chasms that wine had left, and even the grave Philip Marnix grew eloquent with the eagerness of his feelings. Cornelius van der Noot had betaken himself to profound slumber, gently reposing on the shoulders of a patient neighbour, and Charles Mansfeldt alone looked grave; but when the protracted banquet was ended, all that left the palace of Cuylemberg were irrevocably pledged—and retreat being closed by the imprudence of some, the thoughtlessness of others, they had nothing left but to advance, as bravely as they might, along the path they had chosen. The setting sun that gilded their flushed cheeks as they struggled forth into the streets, dissipating, in some measure, the exaltation of their spirits, struck upon them, for the most part, the bitter consciousness that they were engaged, perhaps doomed men.

On the morrow of that day almost the whole of the young nobility of Brussels, and gentlemen belonging to the noblest houses, exhibited on their habiliments tokens of "Gueuseship"—the wooden bowl hanging at their girdles, and the palmer's scallop-shell decorating their caps. By far the greater number, indeed, paraded the streets in the grey serge cloak of the mendicant, with all the pride that ermine could have conferred. The approving shouts of the delighted people as they beheld their champions thus, as it were, hoisting their colours, penetrated to the regent's ear; and bands of beggar-clad noblemen met her astonished eye as, eager to ascertain the cause, she drew near the palace window. These were ominous sights and sounds, and well calculated to fill her bosom with alarm.

From the nobility the freak soon extended to the merchants and people, and spread from town to town, until it became so general that all, everywhere, adopted this manner of expressing their disapprobation of the Inquisition, and sympathy with those who volunteered to beggar themselves in the cause of their threatened liberties. High and low, rich and poor, alike prized the badge and the pledge of an association whose ultimate aim was the wish of every heart, and with a palpable form the party gained at once an established and strong hold on the affections of the masses.

So far Brederode's device, whether the offspring of deep calculation or the chance hit of the moment, was crowned with success; and when the day arrived which he had fixed upon for his departure from Brussels to visit other towns, there were but few in the Netherlands whose inhabitants were not, more or less openly, *Gueux*.

ST. VERONICA; OR, THE ORDEAL OF FIRE.

A BIOGRAPHY.

Chapter V.

A GLEAM of light which penetrated my dungeon greeted my return from slumber, and by its brilliancy announced the dawn. Thus no longer my sight, but my reason, was to acquaint me with the presence of night and day.

"I now know how severe are the pains of imprisonment!" exclaimed I. "The judge who pronounces—the prince who executes—judgment, ought first to undergo, that he may know personally the sufferings to which he sends another. A day to the condemned is longer than a year to the free! O that mercy had been discovered before the power of monarchs became of age; then it would have been taught to the heirs of mock-omnipotence in their youth, and almost have enjoyed the earnestness of religion. And is it then true," continued I, "that the most wretched are afflicted with the brightest dreams, and that glorious visions are bounded on either side by woe?"

The gaoler withdrew the bars and entered with provisions. I regarded him not, nor addressed him, but, when he had retired, I seemed to take a new lease of my dungeon. I thought of arranging my plans and ideas, but all that was written within me seemed hieroglyphical, impossible to be deciphered. I was alarmed to find past history closed; the present, as it were, dying; the future masked, like a monk behind the cowl. I was able to go over my dream but once, and memory was exhausted. I then dwelt on the entrance of the gaoler, and heard the locks and bars for hours, and when I ate my bread and drank my water I shed tears, which were among the few that had relieved me for years. Thus days passed away in inactivity, and nights in dream. Every morning appeared to be the anniversary of some dread affliction, the week was ever at an end, and

Sunday seemed the name of every morrow. My uneasiness increased from hour to hour, and was aggravated by the uncertainty in which the period of my confinement was involved. Willingly would I have commuted my doubts on this subject for the certainty of even twenty years. One morning, as I was dwelling on this thought, my old acquaintance, the well-armed sbirro, entered my dungeon, and, as the lock was turned on the door after him, I conjectured that he had something to communicate. I looked earnestly into his face—I looked closer; he smiled, and in a transport I exclaimed, "It is Labestia—it is Scoronconcolo himself!"

He had entered the police for a time, as he told me, for his own private purposes, but in his new capacity saw no opportunity of assisting me in my escape. He informed me that sacrilege, besides other crimes, was laid to my charge; and that it would be four months, at least, before I should be brought to trial. On hearing this intelligence, I indulged in despair; the certainty now seemed worse than the previous ignorance of my real situation.

"Scoronconcolo," I cried, "I must make my escape this day."

The bravo smiled at my enthusiasm, and told me that my gaoler was guarded by a sentinel outside, whose post was not left night or day; that before reaching the drawbridge I should have to encounter a dozen guards; that the governor's windows overlooked the bridge; and, lastly, that a garrison was stationed in the court outside the citadel.

I mused for several minutes on the possibility of overcoming these extraordinary difficulties, and, being fertile in expedients, a scheme at length flashed upon my imagination. My first inquiry was, whether the gaoler was corruptible. To this Scoronconcolo replied affirmatively, but declared that he saw no advantage derivable from tampering with a man possessed of such limited power.

"When he returns, present him with a sum of money, and desire him by some means to break the windows which overlook the drawbridge, and, under pretence that they cannot be repaired until the following day, let him paste paper over them, so as entirely to shut out the view."

"That part of the scheme may, perhaps, be accomplished," said Scoronconcolo, "but what then?"

"In the next place propose to him that, when he brings me food, he shall unbar my door as usual, then dash the water-jug on the ground, raise an outcry, and throw himself down, as in a fit, at the further end of the passage. The sentinel will hasten to his assistance, will he not? and, while he is struggling to hold him, I will creep from the dungeon, and ascend the steps."

"If the latter part of the scheme be as good as the first," said Scoronconcolo, "success is possible; but how are you to pass the guards?"

"When you have settled all preliminaries with the gaoler," I continued, "go to Volterra, and purchase for me a book sold secretly there, at the shop of one Nobili, and filled with immoral pictures. Take this yourself to the window of the corridor, draw the guards into conversation, and entertain them with the drawings, with your back turned towards the door. They will look over your shoulders with a curiosity not easily satiated, so obscene is the book I name."

Scoronconcolo laughed, and undertook to execute my commands.

"There is another service, not less necessary to the success of my plan,

which you will perform for me at the same time," said I; "procure me the garment of a monk, that, while passing through the garrison, I may confer a blessing on any stragglers who may observe me. Provide, also, a carriage in readiness outside the gates."

"Prince," exclaimed Scoronconcolo, "you are the only man whose sagacity I have yet found equal to my own; all shall be accomplished to-morrow; we cannot meet again until then."

Once more left alone, I thought over my plan, and, upon frequent rehearsal, it appeared simpler and more simple, till at last I knew my part so well, that success seemed certain. At an early hour next morning, Scoronconcolo was again in my presence. Under his cloak he brought the garb, and I was soon dressed in my monastic habit, Scoronconcolo having informed me that everything had succeeded under his directions up to the present time. He told me that he had given the guards a glimpse of the volume, and promised, to their great delight, to return with it in a short time. He added, that his return to the passage would be a signal for the gaoler to commence his part, and that on reaching the gates of the court I should find a carriage ready to convey me away.

I thanked the robber, and promised him a large reward.

The gaoler, faithful to his instructions, had already practised a fit in the governor's room, and smashed the window in the struggle; but shortly recovering from his paroxysm, and appearing as well as before, he was deemed capable of executing his duty for the present.

Scoronconcolo left me; for the first time I doubted the accomplishment of my project. The lock soon turned; the jug was broken; the gaoler fell; the sentinel, alarmed, rushed towards him. I opened the door cautiously; it creaked on its hinges; I was lost! I saw the back of the sentinel—the gaoler had him fast. I advanced on my way; a female passed me as I reached the corridor. I held up my finger to command silence, stretched my arms over her in blessing; she sank on her knees. I traversed the corridor: shouts of laughter smote my ears, the soldiers, one and all, were pressing eagerly forward and looking over each other's backs towards the shoulders of Scoronconcolo, at the immoral pictures which he turned over. I crossed the bridge, and though it rained in torrents I advanced majestically. By the time I had reached the centre of the court, I saw that I was observed by two or three soldiers who were engaged in polishing their arms. I thought it prudent to advance towards them; they met me, and bending reverently before me, received my curse in the parody of a Latin prayer.

Chapter VI.

"What news, my Mezzofonte?"

"None but good since your highness's return."

"Have you learnt the cause of my arrest?"

"The traitor Thanatos denounced you to the government as guilty of sacrilege, committed when at Siena."

"He shall not escape punishment."

"Retain him no longer in your service; while you have been away he has committed the baseness of stealing verses from your manuscripts, and bears your honours."

"Have any persons been here?"

"Many; among them the Duchess of Savatelli, seeking her sister the Lady Giuditta, who had again left the convent of Santa Maria Novella."

"Who has seen her?"

"She has been stricken with the plague. Not long before your departure she fell down in the street; the bell of the Misericordia proclaimed the event."

"What else do you know?—tell me all."

"The news having been brought to the palace when you were sick, Thanatos attended in your stead, for it was your turn. He watched her through her illness, at a time when all her friends were absent, and no nurse would brave the pestilence by administering to the sick."

"Is she restored?"

"Restored, but a homeless wanderer; and her reason said to be impaired."

"Giuditta, then, wanders the wide world! And I am he who set before her delusions which, like the Fata Morgana, have misled her into the wilderness, to fall exhausted at last under the plague. So fatally have I beguiled her simplicity, and led her through scenes of suffering! What a life has mine been, that a being like her should be lost in its pestilential maze. But whither has she departed?"

Then followed a conversation respecting one equally dear.

"Where," I asked, "is the novice who was present at the funeral?"

"She was here, with the Duchess of Savatelli, and is gone to visit her relations in Lombardy."

"To-morrow I will follow; be in readiness at an early hour, and let Ippolito be made acquainted with my determination, that he also may be ready. And stay—should any agent of the government in the mean time appear at my gates, let him not escape thence: I will return to the fortress no more."

From that hour a burning desire impelled me, worn down and shattered as I was, to follow Adora. The only result of anxious inquiries was the information that she had gone to a country-house near Milan, on a visit to a relation, before finally taking the vow. My own country was no longer to me what it had once been, nor could it resume its wonted aspect, except from the beloved presence of her whose image had so often possessed my senses during sleep, and at length been presented to my bodily vision.

In the brief space preceding my departure, seeing that I stood accused by Thanatos, before the sacred heads of the church, of sacrilege, I dreaded lest a sentence of excommunication should complete my isolation, at the thought of which, horror thrilled through my veins. I summoned Thanatos before me, and dismissed him my service, but not in anger: pride led me to treat him with indifference. Notwithstanding his robbery of my works, which must have been fresh in his thoughts, he disregarded the icy barrier that I opposed to him, and taunted me with the immorality of my writings. He said that I was suspected of committing crimes for no other purpose than to describe vividly the sufferings of human beings. This he opened to me with ill-dissembled satisfaction, adding, that critics were so thoroughly possessed with this notion, that they hesitated to decide upon the questioned reality of my merits.

How difficult, indeed, is it to be a sound critic. Consider the word prosperity: it is prose to the rich, poetry to the poor.

When lying in prison I was like to a Prometheus, the vulture preying at the heart; yet then glory seemed to go on ever increasing—the stars still shone—Phidias was beheld in their light, and Petrarch continued immortal. Now that I enjoyed freedom, should I not, as then, drift on with the foremost?

Before parting with my secretary I invited him to an entertainment in the evening, and made the arrangements necessary to accomplish the purpose which I had in view.

I was in the ante-room at the appointed hour, and there awaited his appearance. He was punctual, and wore on his countenance an unusual expression of good-humour, though his lip preserved its sarcastic expression. Influenced, perhaps, by some motive connected with his dismissal, he had given more than ordinary attention to his toilet.

I conducted him into the saloon, and in a moment we were in the midst of a blaze of beauty. There were none but women present; all were splendidly attired. When he entered, some were at the harp, while others sang in sweet accord the praises of the poet Thanatos. Such was his vanity, that, instead of appreciating the sarcasm, he stood in ravishment at the sounds of high-wrought flattery, and gave credence to his sudden elevation to honour.

Soon there was discernible an expression of heartfelt grief in every countenance; and where the words of the music related to the impending departure of my guest, all eyes were turned towards him in tears; and he, believing no doubt that I wished to retain his services, was overcome by the effect, and restrained his emotion with difficulty.

"Have you invited me to this banquet that I may be converted, and know that feeling lives in woman?" he asked.

I looked at him abstractedly, and made no reply. All, meanwhile, regarded him with a sentiment which gave new power to the hand and voice, and was responded to by the deepening melody.

When the sounds ceased, the ladies approached us. I advanced to introduce my companion, whom they received with distinction, though less warmly than they had lauded his merits. He had never before been thrown thus familiarly into the midst of a distinguished circle, nor was he aware that the Florentine women would suffer themselves to be thus entertained, even by a prince; or that they possessed in private life so great condescension, united with such fascinating powers. He was well received by all whom he addressed, and though he feigned indifference whenever his looks met mine, I saw that his cheeks were flushed, his eyes on fire, and his heart in the flames of amorous delight.

Refreshments succeeded the music; and wine, the most choice and delicate, opened the hearts of all present. Thanatos talked more freely than ever, and casting off all reserve expressed the tenderest ideas. The music was renewed, and he listened with rapture at the side of one Leonora, who was surpassingly beautiful. He named to her his favourite airs, and she repeated them in solo, addressing her voice and looks to him alone. She was tall in stature, her eyes were full and downcast, her cheeks suffused with a continual blush, her voice was firm and musical, and when she smiled, her bashfulness seemed to vanish, only to return with her naturally serious and modest expression. There are women whose forms are so noble and voluptuous, that consciousness seems ashamed to inhabit so much beauty, except at the moment when they

speak; then their smile diverts their attention from their charms, and modesty brightens into animation. Such was the case with the fine creature who now absorbed the entire attention of the cynic. She flattered, she intoxicated him with her conversation; and well she might, for she was possessed of beauty which, even when her eyes were downcast, spoke love irresistibly. I had never seen a man more completely subdued to the influence of feminine graces. He came up to me, and squeezed my hand as if I had been his lover, and for the first time in my life I saw the wretch contented.

While Thanatos was thus occupied with his chosen fair one, I divided my attentions among the rest, and amused myself by turns with all. Sweets and viands were served in an adjoining room; wines flowed, eyes sparkled, and the apartments resounded with a general expression of delight.

"What means this charming display of talent and beauty," inquired the cynic. "I candidly confess that you have triumphed; I can neglect the fair no longer."

"Wait another hour," I replied, "and you shall learn its meaning; meantime, continue to enjoy yourself."

He willingly obeyed, and renewed the proofs of his love towards the fair Leonora, who absorbed all his thoughts. The hour was on the confines of dawn, when music was once more renewed, and the company arranged themselves in pleasing groups, and moved to the sounds in dance. When the party at length prepared to disperse, each separately took their farewell of me, and of the secretary.

"Now, Thanatos," said I, "let me hear by what art you have secured to yourself the admiration which this night has been lavished on you?"

"What I have done," answered the cynic, "to deserve of them such favour I know not."

"Have you not won their respect and love?" continued I.

"It appears so, truly," was the answer.

"Every man," I resumed, "who attracts the notice of women, must have merit. Your conquest of Leonora's heart shows that, to command success, you required only to be known. You threw off your assumed indifference, and she saw your deserts; still it remains for time to prove whether her fidelity will reward them."

"She has sworn eternal constancy!" exclaimed the cynic.

"And may her faith be thus lasting!" said I; "but perhaps you have to learn a lesson. I knew, what you only pretended to do, how hollow is the heart of woman. Still, like all others, except yourself, I wished to enjoy the semblance of their regard, not caring for its source so long as I possessed its visible sign. Compelled to part with you, and wishing, before you should leave me, that your literary merits, if not your other accomplishments and occupations, should be acknowledged in an appropriate manner, I hired these lovely creatures to come and enact love and admiration of you; and methinks they have performed this as well as such a part is every day acted in the world."

The cynic was struck dumb; in a hollow satiric laugh he attempted to disguise his mortification. It failed of the desired effect on me; indeed, it was the bitterest laugh that ever shook the sides of a cynic!

When he was gone, I laughed; and an hour afterwards I found myself in the same place, laughing still.

Chapter VII.

"Thou sun, on whose throne sits the majesty of day! whose empire the peace of worlds, the prosperity of nature, and thy watchful look proclaim, I have never cursed thy light! Thou key-stone of the firmament! I who have ever gazed on thee in awe, and am looking now on thy plenteous orb—I, who have erred the most of all men—now bless thee! When my heart has been cold, thou hast infused into it benevolence; when I have been astray, not knowing whither I wandered, thou hast assured me that I was safe.

"The toiling wretch alone complaineth of thy salutary beams! The tyrant swelleth with pride as he watcheth thy lofty course; the beardless, the grey-headed, experience wonder that possessing the earth which they dwell on, they should also enjoy thee and thy lustrous train afar.

"Great men have loved to perish in thy presence; thy rays have cheered their fading vision, and revived the history of nature in their departing spirits.

"The philosopher hath adored equally thy rising and thy setting glory; he hath descried thy lustre in the moon, thy colours in the leaves, thy pencillings in the flowers, thy attributes in the rainbow; he hath acknowledged thy equals in the fixed stars alone.

"O thou, to whom my country is especially grateful, let me, ere I die, be as thou art, tranquil amidst glory; then shall I learn to regard my life as a necessary portion of the past."

Such were my silent thoughts as we ascended the Apennines on our way from Florence. As we left the base of the first ascent below us, we viewed with a delight which, like the recurring dawn, is ever fresh to the Florentine, the extensive city of palaces and villas below; for the suburban habitations which grace the vale of Arno and the encircling hills, as thickly as the stars gem the heavens, appear afar to be a portion of that city whose centre is Florence, whose glory is the Palazzo Vecchio, the Duomo, the Campanile!

"Beautiful Italy!" exclaimed Ippolito; "in what soft sublimity these Apennines float on thy bosom! The sun throws his many-coloured beams over the velvet hollows, the shadows of the journeying cloud come like breaths of air to waft the mountains away."

"Did you observe," continued Ippolito, "that as we passed the cemetery on our left, with its cross in the centre, a labourer mowed the grass between the flat gravestones? How well does that scythe-armed peasant represent the person of Time! The bladed grass drops on the ashes of the dead which nourished it, and is gathered into stacks for use, a season bringing life to the dead, another requiring it back. In this manner revolution ever varies the empire of matter, while scythe-armed Time, the viceroy of Eternity, looks on."

"Who has taught you thus to meditate," I inquired, not a little surprised at the tone of feeling he manifested.

"The great master," answered Ippolito; "he has taught me things whose virtue compels that love of nature which it is man's highest destiny to know. Truth is dear to him; with equal devotion he searches after the rights of matter and of mind, and from simple examples arrives at sublimest ideas. Not an atom, he says, can be ever lost, nor one of its

far-extending relations be impeded. Though the volcano hurry it from the centre to the surface, though the storm bear it from the Alps up to the Andes, though the concussion of worlds banish it to other planets, though the sun should absorb it into its vibrating orb, its safety is ensured. Though its erratic course endure through ages inconceivable, at the fixed time it returns like the comet to its place. Who can calculate its time? A mission the Creator stamps on its tiny globe, and its return is marked by the same order of things as existed when any one of its careers began."

We passed but few travellers on the way. Here and there a cart creaked along, with the muddy carter lying in it at full length like a huge worm, while the horse, pursuing its own way, looked about for amusement. Or suddenly a crew of mendicant children would rush out upon us open-handed, resembling forms of clay, which, vivified by the sun, had scrambled out of their native ditch to beg.

It was spring, but as evening approached sounds resembling the voice of autumn were borne in the breeze, and we passed between hills which arose in defiance of the sky, their abrupt summits and naked crags asserting the sway of an evil power, as eloquently as the plains argued the government of a good.

At Covigliaio ended our first day's journey. The following day, starting early for Bologna, we set forward on foot, the carriage following. Ippolito entered again on the subject of Etruscan philosophy, and led the conversation until we reached the cottage of a mountaineer, situated on a humble bank by the roadside. The proprietor, an aged man, was working in his garden; we stopped and spoke to him. His ancestors, he informed us, had occupied this cottage for ages, and the land bore his family name. If pride, thought I, be not blameable in the great, let it not be condemned in a rustic patrician!

We went on, advancing through scenery of a wilder aspect, and whose antiquity appeared to us to be ancestral to creation itself, and as such arrested our thoughts; while extended beneath us we saw the Lombard plains, and afar off the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas. But those thoughts were but the false poetry of the mind, for the soil which we had deemed the rude parent, was, in truth, the grave of nature; for it proved to be composed of shells and sands, which had been deposited in tombs of the now distant ocean. From Lojano, where we saw these things, we descended to Pianoro, and thence through a rich country to Bologna: but in the midst of plenty forgot not the barren mountains, and thanked Heaven that the human race was permitted to live safely among the wrecks of a once glad creation.

On reaching this famed city, we proceeded to the palace of the counts of Pepoli, whose last descendant was a beloved and respected friend, with whom, during my early travels, I had passed many profitable hours. I loved him for his humanity, and reverenced him for his genius, which had added new graces to the arts and letters of his father-land. He was one of those who, to release his country from thraldom, was willing to sacrifice the noble possessions which his ancestors had won in repelling the inroads of tyranny. Bologna was his place of habitation, but the world his home. His palace contained the choicest works of Caravaggio, Raffaelle, Buonarotti, Titian, Giulio Romano,

Bellini, Ghirlandajo, Giotto, Cimabue; but he cared for these treasures only as they incited his mind to glory, and his heart to good. His qualities were so great, they endangered his own welfare with the desire to share it with mankind.

On a visit with the family of this nobleman, to my great surprise, I found Æthra Piccolomini, now the consort of the Count di Marsino, a lord of Milan, distinguished in the profession of arms, but whom I had regarded with antipathy in former years at Siena. Æthra had been staying at Bologna for her health, and was about to return home. It being known that I was on my way to the north, it was proposed that I should unite my suite with hers, that she might have the benefit of my protection.

The expression of the Countess di Marsino's countenance was not much changed; it indicated little desire of admiration, and her mind appeared wholly absorbed in rational pursuits. Although addressed in the most flattering manner, her replies were sensible; if she betrayed pleasure, it was rather elicited by the subject of conversation than the language of praise. She was lively, and possessed a wit so delicate that her railleries were devoid of offence. But, in spite of her modest deportment, there was a certain restlessness in her charms, which not only attracted, but rivetted the attention of men. With every feature lovely as ever, there was a new manner which kept all these charms in constant play, and made her quiet and retiring figure conspicuous amidst her sex. Now, with a sudden, but graceful movement of the head, she would regard some inanimate object which attracted no other person's attention; now she would smile at her own thoughts; now, after a pretty laugh, she would give utterance to some remark without appearing to expect a reply; and all these graces succeeded one another so rapidly in her, and with so little apparent consciousness of their effect, that it was scarcely possible to notice any one else, or to avoid sympathising in whatever related to her.

I remained a few days at Bologna, and found that this lady made a considerable sensation in society. Love was made to her without mercy; but the married beauty did not seem to perceive it. I remarked that she only looked up when she herself commenced a subject; that, when spoken to, she bent her eyes to the ground. She appeared to prefer no one, but always to be equally pleased with all; and whomsoever she laughed with to-day, had almost forgotten by the morrow. To those only whose guest she was did she evince a feeling, and this increased the general desire to elicit sentiment from the fair one.

I saw it was my policy to treat her as if I thought her not difficult to please, and I contrived to regain her confidence. The weather being most inviting she offered, on the afternoon before our departure, to walk with me into the country. I gladly assented, and we bent our steps towards the Modena road. We roamed beside barberry hedges, and under the shade of the acacia, blossoming with its white and odoriferous flowers. On either hand we beheld a country overflowing with vegetation. There, was the favourite lupin; there, the pear and wild cherry, lending support to the vine, which, as it hung in festoons towards the earth, wafted the delicious perfume of its blossoms, giving promise of autumnal stores of the purple and yellow grape.

She had received me neither with the confidence of a relation, nor with the regard of former times; this demeanour on her part led me to reflect on all that had happened since we had met. I suspected this reserve had reference to Giuditta, but I was willing to ascribe it to marriage, which changes the manners of woman.

We had communed on many topics—the days of Siena, her sister's and her own marriage among the rest, and then I trembled at what must follow—allusion to poor Giuditta; and it was made in a manner which I was unprepared to expect.

"You saw Angus at the villa Savatelli?" she said.

"I did," replied I.

"He has been here."

"His movements are very rapid indeed," I observed.

"He came to see me."

"Who would not do the same," I rejoined, as the expression of her countenance recalled the image of Giuditta.

"He came to make inquiry of me concerning my sister Giuditta. 'Æthra,' said he, 'I hear she has become a Sister of Mercy—is it true? I ask with much anxiety.' I answered, 'I have not heard lately from home, but it is understood she has retired from the world owing to disappointed love.'"

Throughout this communication I suffered deeply; and inquired, "Were there any further circumstances to be related?"

"Angus," she replied, "avowed a passion for Giuditta, but declared that he resigned his claim to you as worthier of her than himself."

"What followed," said I, despairingly.

"He said no more," replied Æthra.

I had heard too much, and what I had heard I put by for solitary reflection, and for deep soul-diving repentance.

By some means I felt grateful to Æthra for sparing me further pain: she must have known all, why therefore did she not resent my conduct? Yet what had I done! No one knew how deep a meaning lived in the cathedral scene, directed less to Giuditta than to her friend; and no one could blame me because Giuditta, as a Sister of Mercy, had twice watched during my insensibility at my pillow. Nevertheless, I was grateful to Æthra for sparing me, and I regarded her with all the love which the dear Giuditta, too late, had lighted up in my heart. She approached me with affection, which was unexpected, as undeserved: and with all this grateful feeling in myself I stayed not to examine what she felt, comforted beyond measure and supported by her sweet and soothing smiles, such smiles as her sister had vouchsafed me when she loved with hope! The wild fires thus kindled by nature in our bosoms could not burn apart; like two flames, directing their spires towards each other, they almost became one.

THE STRANGERS.

BEING THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF "INCIDENTS OF THE ROAD; OR, PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER."

By Joseph Anthony, Jun.

> And she indeed,
> With her pale, virgin brow, and changeful cheek,
> And the clear starlight of her serious eyes,
> Lovely amidst the flowing of dark locks
> And pallid binding flowers, was beautiful.
>
> Mrs. Hemans.

"She is coming, sir," said the waiter, as he entered the room, rousing me from the reverie in which I had been indulging, whilst gazing on the red embers of the fire, for the time forgetting that I should soon have to quit my comfortable quarters for the night mail and a fifty-miles journey. Following the announcement, the blast of a horn and the distant clatter of horses' hoofs, borne on the wind through the silent streets, intimated the near approach of the conveyance by which I purposed journeying on to the ancient city of Hereford.

As I issued from the gateway of the hotel, the mail turned the corner by the old Town Hall, and with her lamps gleaming, like two fiery eyes, through the darkness, came rattling down the street at a pace which plainly indicated she was, indeed, behind her time. Rain was descending in torrents, and the wind, as it fitfully swept along, was keen and cutting, as though it came from a region of icebergs.

"Bad night for you, Robinson," said the horsekeeper, addressing the coachman, as that heavily-coated and dripping Jehu descended from the box. "And the road's uncommon heavy, I know," added the presiding genius of the stable, as his eyes rested on the mud-bespattered hides of the reeking team.

"Uncommon heavy," responded he of the whip, and adding some very brief but very emphatic anathemas on one of his wheelers, which he declared possessed a cast-iron mouth, and had nearly pulled his arms off, he disappeared under the gateway, no doubt to seek a refresher after his contest with "such a brute."

On taking my place, I found but one inside passenger. The surly tones of his voice, reproving the guard for not displaying more alacrity in closing the door after my entrance, at once checked any inclination which I might have entertained for entering into conversation with him, or to seek further knowledge of his humanity than the dim outline of his figure and the inharmonious tones of his voice afforded.

It seemed, however, we were to have more company.

Two individuals, who, under the gateway of the inn, had been apparently holding a parley with the landlord, with the assistance of the guard—for one of them was seemingly aged and feeble—took the two remaining inside places, whilst the burly Boniface, pitching his voice with some exertion above the roar of the blast, so as to be heard by the coachman, who had mounted the box, thus enlightened us as to the terms on which the new comers were admitted:—

"If you have any insides to take up, Robinson, the old man and the young woman must turn out, as they are only booked outside."

"Very well, sir," replied the husky voice of the whip. "Are you right there, Jem?"

"Right!" was the response from behind; and away we went through the dimly-lighted streets, away into the jaws of night, the rain beating furiously against the windows of the coach, and the wind-like voices of the spirits of darkness howling wildly around us.

The brief glance I had obtained of the last comers had been sufficient to indicate, that in the event of their having to turn out, according to the directions given, to them it would, indeed, be a very undesirable change; for, in addition to the age and feebleness of one of them, neither were provided with sufficient clothing to meet the fury of the night. We had not proceeded far, ere I gathered from their conversation that they were father and daughter. The latter appeared to be very assiduous in attending to her aged companion, addressing him in a low endearing tone of voice, which was remarkable for its sweetness; and I observed that she occasionally gave him from the small bag which she carried what I judged to be lozenges, and which he evidently had recourse to as an alleviation of a constant hacking cough with which he was afflicted.

From the circumstances attendant upon their entering the coach, I concluded they were in needy circumstances, whilst their language—revealing that in point of education they were much above the lower grades of life—led me to regard them as forming a portion of that, alas! numerous—shall I add unhappy—class! "the poor genteel."

As we proceeded on our journey, I endeavoured to draw the father into conversation. His distressing cough prevented him from conversing freely; the topics we discussed were of an ordinary character, yet, from the little he said, I felt a desire to hear more, and, indeed, insensibly became deeply interested in the two strangers. We had progressed some seven or eight miles on our journey, when the mail pulled up. I heard a voice without, and caught the word, "Inside," and throwing down the coach window, found that we were standing before the gateway of a lodge, where I observed a lady, closely muffled up, a box at her feet, and a servant, with a lantern, holding over her an umbrella, the rain still descending in torrents. The coach door, as I expected, was opened by the guard, who, addressing the booked outsiders, intimated that one of them must give place to the lady. The old man and his daughter rose from their seats together.

"I'll go, papa; indeed I will," said the latter.

"You must not, Emily—shall not," replied her companion, in a slightly authoritative tone. "I insist that ——" His hacking cough came on again; he could not finish the sentence, but made an effort to pass her.

To this the daughter, who sat nearest the open door, whilst the gruff voice of the guard was urging them to be quick, replied hurriedly, and in an under tone, "My dear papa, it would be your death." And gently pushing him back to the seat from which he had risen, and folding her light cloak around her, she turned to descend the steps.

Whilst this brief and hasty dialogue was passing, I drew my winter dreadnought from the seat which I occupied, and interposing myself between

the last speaker and the door, in a few words intimated that there was no necessity for her to quit the inside of the coach. And, to be brief, ere she could recover from her surprise, my place was taken by the new comer, I had mounted the box-seat, and we were off again, and away through the black hurricane.

It was, indeed, a fearful night; the rain came down with unusual violence, whilst the wind, in its bitter cold, cut most severely. Enveloped, however, in my huge coat—the hero of a hundred storms—I cared but little for the angry elements, and soon fell into a speculating reverie on the probable fortunes, trials, and fate of my late companions.

My inquiries, addressed to the coachman, respecting them, elicited little beyond that which I already knew. They were utter strangers to him, and were booked to a small town situated some fifteen miles short of my own place of destination—Hereford.

I must confess that I was not a little pleased when we arrived at ——. Dripping as though I had emerged from the bed of a river, I descended from my seat whilst the change of horses took place, to obtain some refreshment in the hotel. Although desirous of learning something more about the interesting couple of the inside of the coach, I was at the same time anxious to escape the acknowledgment which, I did not doubt, with the opportunity, would be tendered by the invalid and his companion, and with this intent, hastily entered the inn ere they had quitted the coach, concluding that they would have taken their departure when I should again issue forth. To insure this, if possible, I lingered in the bar, sipping my negus, until the coachman's "Now then, sir," twice repeated, apprised me that it was full time to depart. I soon discovered that my object was to be frustrated. Standing by the hotel door, evidently awaiting my coming, my eyes fell upon my late companions—the old man and his daughter. The lamp over the doorway revealed to me in the one an aged and careworn visage; the other—ah! the recollection of that countenance, so sad, though young, so sweet, so full of spiritual light, so beautiful—teaches me that little less than profanity would be the endeavour to describe it. Did angels in these days descend from realms above to irradiate our sphere, I could believe it had been mine to gaze on the beauty of immortality.

I will not repeat the language which the old gentleman—for such, though a broken-down one, he evidently was—addressed to me in acknowledging what he termed my good-nature. There was not only a warmth, but an ineffable grace in the manner with which he requested to shake me by the hand in parting; whilst his fair and delicate-looking companion, with an expression of countenance more eloquent than words, paid me a thousand times over for the little piece of consideration I had shown.

Reader, though very brief and hurried, our parting was more like the separation of old friends than that of strangers; and so much had my sympathy in their behalf been awakened, that I pursued my journey oppressed with a feeling of sadness, which, for some time, I found impossible to dispel. I never was, and trust I never shall be, one of those who can from smooth waters look unmoved on their fellows buffeting with the storm, and who regard with indifference the struggles against the tide of an adverse fate—of a wearied, and, perhaps, breaking spirit. Such unmoved spectators are not to be envied. They would reduce the scene

of human life to a vast arena, make us all gladiators battling with each other, where the vanquished in the fight would fall, alas! ever unbefriended, unpitied, and unwept.

In the midst of active pursuits, rapid change of scene, and other incidents, the circumstances which I have here related had passed away from my thoughts, to be, however, again recalled to my recollection, and all my former interest in the strangers awakened, on my again visiting —— some months afterwards. Recalling to memory my meeting with the aged invalid and his interesting daughter, and influenced by a strong desire to see them again, and to learn something of their history, I decided upon tarrying a summer's day in —— for that purpose, as well as to enjoy a ramble through its beautiful suburb scenery, of which I had heard high praise.

Since my last visit there had been a great change in the occupancy of the hotel at ——. Excepting the head boots—or "top boots," as the well-worn stock wit of an inn so frequently designates him—who continued with the new landlord of the old "régime," not one beside remained. This useful functionary being, therefore, the only one from whom I could expect to gain any information on the subject in which I was so much interested, after supper I summoned him to my presence to make inquiries respecting the old gentleman and his daughter, and to ascertain from him the necessary particulars to guide me in my contemplated proceedings of the morrow.

To do but simple justice to the qualifications and attainments of the race of "boots" of hotels in large towns, generally speaking they are very sharp, very clever, and very useful fellows. In the country, however, one of the genus deserving such a character might safely be pronounced a very remarkable exception to the rule. A slouching, heavy gait, slowness of apprehension, a dull eye, and a drawling speech, characterise the country "boots;" and a choice specimen of his class was the genius of the blacking-bottle, who did the spiriting

> From leather soiled and dim,
> To polish sparkling bright,

for the Royal Oak at ——.

True, the names of the individuals of whom I sought intelligence I knew not, but amongst so small a gathering of humanity as vegetated in the place, I little doubted that my description of the parties I sought would enable the sage I consulted to put me on their track. He had, however, not the most remote knowledge of such persons as I described; he didn't know, he said, but he didn't think that there were any such people at that time in the town. I was about to dismiss him, satisfied that it would be useless to question him further, when a new thought struck me.

"Can you remember," said I, "about four months ago, Robinson, who was driving the down mail, coming in one rough night, and flinging his 'sou'-wester,' wringing wet, into old Charley, the horsekeeper's face?"

This circumstance occurred to me at the moment, it having caused a loud "guffaw," on the night I alluded to, amongst the few loungers who had gathered under the gateway of the Royal Oak to see the mail come in; Robinson, be it observed, being an established droll fellow, and, as one of them at the time remarked, "always full of his fun."

On this appeal to his recollection being made, "boots" paused, and looked up at the ceiling of the room with an expression almost ludicrous on his heavy features, as though the effort to carry back his memory a stretch of four months was no less difficult than novel to him. At length, with a gleam awakening in his sleepy eyes, and a laugh breaking around his capacious mouth, he replied that he "moinded" that night very well.

"Then," said I, quickly, desirous of not losing a moment lest his memory should break under the unusual strain, "you must recollect two passengers who came by the mail, an old man and a young girl, their luggage being a large box. Do you remember them, and who carried their luggage?"

I was fortunate in having fired the train of his rarely-exercised faculty of memory: he did recollect them now I mentioned it, and, what was more, had carried their box himself. Their names he had never heard; all that he remembered was, that he carried the luggage to Mrs. Wilson's, who lived beyond the church on the L—— road; he supposed they were lodgers of her'n, but he didn't know, as he never saw them before as he "know'd on," and he had never seen them since. Gratified to learn so much, after ascertaining further particulars relative to the distance and situation of Mrs. Wilson's, I dismissed Mr. "Boots," and soon after retired to rest, indulging in pleasing anticipations of the morrow.

That morrow came—rosy, bright, and beautiful. The month was June—leafy June. June, with its bright, sunshiny face; its sweet breathings from the fields; its music of soaring larks up in the tranquil sky; and hidden brooks singing their quiet tune. How delightful at such a time to throw open the casement of one's bedroom, and whilst the eye rests on the bright leaves, wet with dew, laughing in the sun in all their refreshing and inspiring greenery, to inhale the perfume of flowers, which one might deem was the incense of heaven wafted to earth in the breath of the young and rosy day!

With the description received from Mr. Boots, I had little difficulty in finding Mrs. Wilson's dwelling. Situated about half a mile from the town, it presented the appearance of a superior sort of cottage, with a good sized garden in front sloping to the road, from which the house lay some fifty paces or more. A more delightful situation could not easily be imagined. Whilst in front, rich in vegetable productions, fruits, and flowers, the garden spread its treasures to the eye; in the rear of the building, gradually rose a graceful swell of cultivated upland, crested with a clump of trees, suggestive on a summer's day of delightful shade, and a sweet spot for a rambler who, like myself, would seek the summit for the view which it evidently commanded of the beautiful valley and the little town of ——, nestling within it. Looking from the front of the cottage, the eye was gratified with a fine sweep of undulating pastoral country, fringed in the far distance with a belt of deep forest-trees, from which abruptly rose a magnificent chain of dark mountains, whose high, bold, naked outline was distinctly seen marked on the horizon.

Partly covered with ivy, the cottage was also graced over the doorway with a fine honeysuckle, profuse in blossom, whose delicious perfume on my approach seemed to vie with the breathings of numberless roses, which twined around the lower windows of the dwelling. Such was the abode of Mrs. Wilson.

The cottage homes of England,
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,
And round the hamlet fanes;
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves,
And fearless there they lowly sleep,
As the birds beneath their eaves.

MRS. HEMANS.

The little servant girl who answered my knock at the door, ushered me into a small plainly-furnished room over-looking the garden, where I was soon joined by the mistress of the house, who, with some little surprise depicted in her countenance, was evidently a little puzzled to account for my calling upon her. She was somewhat advanced in years, plainly and neatly attired, possessing, however, a strikingly benevolent expression of countenance, such as I have rarely looked upon. I may here observe that Mrs. Wilson was a widow, whose husband had been a tradesman in ——. The limited means with which she had been left, induced her to take the cottage, letting out a part of it, which, with the produce of her garden, enabled her to float pretty smoothly down the stream of life.

The object of my visit was soon told. I described when and where I had met with the individuals I was in search of, the interest they had awakened in me in their behalf, and my earnest desire to see them again. It appeared afterwards, that Mrs. Wilson had been informed by her lodgers of the circumstances attendant upon our journeying together, and to the warm praise, which doubtless had accompanied the recital of the little service received from a stranger, I ascribed the kindness of manner and readiness on her part to give me all the intelligence she possessed respecting them. It was a brief history. They had occupied a part of her dwelling about two years; and about two months previous to my visit, Miss Emily, who, in the widow's language, had been ailing for some time, changed much for the worse; she had been compelled to relinquish her customary walks, her strength forsook her, and, carried off by a rapid decline, "she died," said Mrs. Wilson, bursting into tears at this part of her narrative; "she died, sir, one morning as May was going out, and she now lies in our churchyard."

The widow was considerably affected as she proceeded to inform me of the strength of affection that had existed between father and child; it seemed that he had sat for hours beside her up to the moment of her death, and ere her young and gentle spirit passed away, his name was the last utterance of her lips. She was buried under an elm-tree in the churchyard, with the simple inscription of her Christian name on the tombstone, and, after the burial, the old gentleman had left the place, Mrs. Wilson knew not whither. He had warmly expressed his gratitude to her for her kind attentions to his daughter, and, in answer to her inquiry when he was bidding her good-by, informed her that it was not his intention ever to return. Such was the intelligence conveyed to me at the widow's cottage; such was the result of my visit. I should meet them no more.

In the course of our conversation, Mrs. Wilson gave me further information respecting the strangers, which tended, if possible, to enhance the interest I had previously entertained; revealing, as it did, that clouds had

indeed spread o'er their sunshine, and to them that sunshine had never come again.

The former occupants of the widow's rooms having quitted them about two years ago, it appeared she had advertised them in the county papers, describing the situation, and the moderate terms; the result was an application by a Mr. Allanby, who, with his daughter, subsequently entered upon them. The old gentleman had frankly informed Mrs. Wilson, that, as well as the beauty and salubrity of the situation, the lowness of terms had considerably influenced his choice in taking the rooms.

"I am anything but a rich man, Mrs. Wilson," said he, "and we shall require but humble fare."

And at another time, when making the arrangements before the arrival of his young companion, he said,

"I shall require little or no attention myself, Mrs. Wilson, but to my daughter be attentive; nay, be kind to her"—a tear rose in his eye as he spoke—"for she is but delicate, and lowly in spirits; but your country air will, I hope and trust, soon bring her health and spirits again."

"From the first moment I saw Miss Emily," said the widow, "I took a great liking to her, and thought more of her each day as I became better acquainted with her sweet disposition; but until her death I knew not how much I loved her. She was so good natured, so sweet tempered, and ever endeavouring to appear cheerful, though so sad at heart. Before the old gentleman she was always so, and yet, poor thing! when he has been away on his lonely rambles, and she has been alone, I have heard her sobbing as though her heart would break. Her grief," continued Mrs. Wilson, "was, I think, principally on her father's account, for she once told me that he had suffered a heavy reverse of fortune, which had reduced him to the broken gentleman I beheld him."

Allanby, it appeared, was an assumed name. He had, in giving it to the widow, informed her that it was so, and that he had reasons for wishing his own name not to transpire. Mrs. Wilson gave me further particulars respecting the strangers, and most touching was the depth of feeling and simplicity combined whilst recounting the efforts which father and child had made to cheer each other, and to conceal the deep grief which they both endured.

With other information respecting them, Mrs. Wilson also informed me that, on the occasion of my meeting them, they had been a distant journey, although the place of their visit had not, to her, been mentioned.

From certain observations made by the old gentleman, the widow had reason to believe it had been something of a crisis in their fortunes, and that its result was disastrous. Ever after, Mr. Allanby appeared almost heart-crushed, and in spirit utterly prostrate; increased by the evident change for the worst in his daughter's health; and as she sank, and died, he became almost deranged in his grief.

"Oh! sir, she was so kind-hearted," said Mrs. Wilson, recurring to the ill-fated Emily, "she would sing and read to me for hours together. See—these are drawings of hers, which she gave me, and which are to me the dearest of treasures."

The widow drew from a drawer, where they were carefully laid and folded up in paper, a number of pencil sketches, possessing considerable merit. They bore also, in pencil, the signature of "Emily," and consisted of a series of views taken in the vicinity of the cottage.

One of them, which I have the happiness of possessing, presents the

prospect commanded from the front of the widow's dwelling, and which I have attempted to describe. The sketch, which I highly prize, is of singular fidelity and beauty, displaying, on the part of the ill-fated artist, very remarkable taste and ability.

As my gaze rested on these evidences of a cultivated mind, the pale, beautiful countenance that I had once seen passed again before me, I had learnt her sad history and her death together,—shall I hesitate to say that I shed a tear o'er the pencilled landscape on which I was gazing.

In the churchyard of ——, beneath the wide-spreading branches of an elm-tree, may be seen a tombstone, bearing this simple inscription—"Emily." A visitor of the town, who, like myself, might direct his steps to the rural and picturesque burying-place, would find it, amongst the mementos of the dead, to awaken his interest, and to excite his imagination.

The inquiries which he might be led to make of the old sexton on the subject, would, however, elicit but little information, although, in its meagreness, perhaps, calculated to add to the interest already awakened.

"She was a young girl who was a stranger in these parts. After she was buried here, her father, who people said had once been a real gentleman, left the place, and nobody knew anything about them, except widow Wilson, that they lodged with, and we buried her last Michaelmas."

Such was the reply of the man of the mattock, as, on one of my visits to the churchyard, to look upon the lonely grave, I put the question to him as to its tenant, whilst he was busy preparing another last home beside it.

Reader, I have never visited that grave without shedding thereon a tear, occasionally crossing the horny hand of the grave-digger with a coin, that I may find, on my next coming, the rank weeds overgrow it not in its lowliness, and that, in my own loved summer, fair flowers shall deck the tomb of Emily.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOUR.*

BY CAROLINE DE CRESPIGNY.

Thou "gaunt anatomy,"†—steel embraced!
Walled round a living tomb!
In gauntlets, greaves, and cuirass cased,
My flesh creeps at thy doom!

With casque unclosed and blood-red crest,
Against thy dungeon backed,
Thou barest thy broad and stalwart chest,
Defying, grim, erect.

There's many a dint upon thy sword—
A sword none now could wield;
Thou mightst have been the castle's lord,
Save that in blank thy shield.

* "At the beginning of the last century, there was made at Handshuseim, near Heidelberg, an interesting discovery.—On descending a winding staircase, some one struck the wall, which gave out a hollow tone; this wall was broken open, and a niche appeared, and in it a knight in full armour. On exposure to the air the skeleton fell to pieces, and the armour with it. The helmet bore traces of gilding and sword-dints."—*Von H. Schreiber.*

† Spenser.

Say, did that iron coffin once
Enclose the heart and frame
Of one of Baden's bravest sons,
Though now without a name?

Or wert thou, tell me, in thy time,
Hired soldier, serf, or knight?—
Some feat of heroism thy crime?—
Or deed that shunned the light?

Wert thou a captive in the fight?—
A traitor at the gate?
Some jealous Castellaine's delight,
And victim of her hate?

Or daredst thou *more* than lift thy thought
To thy lord's virtuous dame,
And, for thy burning passion, bought
This penance of her shame?

Reveal! how long that heart did beat,
And gasp for air and breath,
What hours, in that steel winding-sheet,
And each a living death?

Wert thou thy cruel foe's derision,
Tortured by every taunt?—
Or racked thy soul by deep contrition?—
Or did thee nothing daunt?

Silent! a ruin, as thou art,
I call upon these stones,
Weed-overwaving, to impart
Some record of thy bones!

In symbols told a mummy's story,
Upon his pictured shell;
But mem'ries none, of shame or glory,
Remain thy tale to tell.

Old Death's head, with thy ghastly grin,
Best fitting such a hearse,
No wonder all these walls within
Is blighted by thy curse.

No marvel that the place is haunted—
That from thy shattered wreck,
To scare a soul, the most undaunted
Heard nightly groan and shriek.

'Tis just that blood should call down blood*—
That fallen on evil days,
Should perish in a deadly feud,
The last of an ill race.

Yet here, 'mid desolation's reign,
Nature is beauteous still—
Smiles rich with corn and wine the plain,
Woods sheltering clothe the hill.

But, as these grass-grown courts I paced,
And wove this idle rhyme,
The "skeleton in armour" chased
All charm from Handschuseim.†

* "The family to whom the castle belonged possessed it for 500 years. It became extinct in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the last of the race was killed in single combat, in the market-place of Heidelberg, by a noble of Herschhorn."—*Von H. Schreiber.*

† Handschuseim means "Gauntlet Town."

PROFESSIONAL MEN.

By E. P. Rowsell, Esq.

No. II.

THE CLERGYMAN.

It should, indeed, be only after very deep and earnest consideration that a man should adopt the Church as a profession. There is something more needed than that he should satisfy himself he has sufficient qualifications to enable him to perform the duties of the ministry without halt or stumbling. I may not say, "the Church appears to me, from certain reasons, the profession in which I am most likely to succeed, in which I shall earn the best livelihood, and gain most distinction, and therefore will I embrace it." It is not in such a spirit that a man can lawfully assume the highest of professions. It is *done:* every day such motives prompt to the entering the Church, but I would not be that man who, merely because his uncle may be a bishop, or his grandfather patron of a living, at once rudely grasps a calling, his adoption of which is supposed to be, and emphatically should be, dictated only by a sure and certain feeling that he is in every way fitted for it, and by the presence of thoughts and emotions that unmistakeably point it out as his true and appropriate sphere of action. Conceive the mischief of having in the ministry a number of men who simply perform their duties for the purpose of obtaining a livelihood; who respect their profession, but who have no love for it; who did not choose it; who never would have chosen it; who acquiesced in the being placed in it because opposition would have involved family disputes; and because, while inclination and liking were not present, absolute aversion was absent, and there were considerations of respectability and emolument to which regard had to be paid. There can be no debate, I apprehend (and I am anxious now to speak with all calmness, and without shadow of disrespect),—I repeat, I imagine there can be no debate but that such men, and in numbers, we have in the ministry at this moment; men against whose lives rests no sort of charge; men of high honour, able, mayhap, and liberal and kind-hearted; but men who are satisfied with the performing their duties respectably; who go through them, not from love of them, but as a matter of course; who read prayers because it is their calling to read prayers; and who preach because it is a part of their profession to preach; but who do neither the one nor the other from the promptings of that high and lofty spirit, the swelling of that glorious and overpowering emotion, which the Church supposes to be within the breast of every man who has taken on himself to advocate her cause, to devote himself to her service, to live for her exaltation and extension, and, if need be, to die for her welfare and advancement.

I say, then, that I believe it to be a most unjustifiable act, the adoption of the ministry as a profession, without there be other motives inducing such a course than the impression that it will lead peculiarly to worldly advantage. The Church requires the presence of those other motives, and the entering the profession without them is an unholy and reprehensible proceeding.

But this is not all. A man may have the feeling of which I speak; he may be young, but yet have the wisdom of age; and he may really

look longingly to the arena opened by the Church as one in which he has all the inclination strongly and successfully to contend. And yet it may be that he cannot with propriety embrace this much-desired course of life. It may be that, with all the *will* to undertake it, there may be wanting the *power* required for the efficiently performing its duties. There may be wanting the mental power. It is no light subject to grapple with is theology; it is no matter open to the meanest intellect, or to be comprehended by the slightest mental exertion. We may, indeed, know all that may be essential to our eternal salvation, and yet be but little learned in theology—little skilled in theological argument. But the clergyman, whose profession it is to deal with the mightiest mysteries, who will probably have among his congregation men and women of every grade of intellect, the puny and the powerful, and the mediocre—it may not be that he may be found unfitted for the task, if called upon to prove in clearest and most convincing manner the whole basis of his faith, and to assault and destroy all that cavillers and sceptics may bring against it to injure it. And the clergyman cannot do this, however sincere he may be in his profession, however much he may love it, and however learned he may be—he cannot discharge this terribly onerous and important duty unless his intellectual capabilities be as much above the common as is the subject which he has to handle above ordinary matters. It seems to me essential that a clergyman should be gifted above his fellows. We have infidelity on every side; broad unbelief and half-confessed doubts are widely prevalent. And wicked men, men who avow that they have no hope nor care regarding a future, are always wonderfully eager and subtle in argument; 'tis desperation which makes them so, and they try to persuade themselves that that which their degradation asserts is that which their calm and collected reason approves and can justify. And these men require to be met and to be vanquished. Yes; but it is not every clergyman of the present day who can vanquish them; many there are who would not even venture to argue with them. And rightly so, for truth's champion would be the weaker; and error, in skilful hands, even as a bad cause advocated by an able pleader, would in all probability come off victorious. This would be the result—a result chargeable against the practice of admitting men insufficiently intellectually gifted into the profession of the Church. Oh! let a young man hesitate before entering the Church; let him pause, and solemnly ask himself whether in every respect, without question and without doubt, he is fitted for the glorious but awfully responsible profession he is seeking to embrace.

And inasmuch as preaching forms a very important part of a minister's duties, a man is not qualified to become a minister unless qualified properly to preach. Preaching in the present day is almost useless. Some clergymen have the power but not the will to make an impression. It seems a serious thing to say, but I contend that a great number of clergymen do not take even *decent* pains to produce an effect. By this I mean, that they compose a sermon something after the fashion in which a cook would compose a stew; there are certain ingredients; these they mechanically take, and, having thrown them well together, and flavoured them with a few quotations from Scripture, lo! the sermon is finished, and is served out to a most indifferent congregation with great gravity the next Sunday. Having enlarged on this point in an article which ap-

peared in this magazine some months ago, I do not purpose further dwelling upon it now; but I repeat, that this coldness is very disgusting in my sight, and I do hope that, from whatever motive it proceeds, it will be banished, and if sincerity be really in the preacher, his efforts will manifest it. The point upon which I now wish to fasten the reader's attention is, that while in many cases the failing to produce an impression is attributable to inertness, in some cases, even were this objection removed, and the minister to exert himself to the best of his power, there would still lack an effect on account of indisputable incapability to create it. It is not every man who can express himself with the clearness and force absolutely indispensable to the rendering his auditory a pleased and attentive one. And if he cannot accomplish this result, where lies the usefulness of his labours? What good accrues from the preaching of the greater number of our divines? The listening to a sermon, I say it openly, is, commonly speaking, a nuisance. The sermon is such a bungle from beginning to end, exhibiting so glaringly want of will or want of power, or both; showing so clearly that there really is either no inclination to make the vigorous effort necessary to the creating an impression, or that there is no knowledge how to make it; that it is painful—I repeat, it is painful—to listen to an ordinary discourse from the pulpit. Now this is a very sad, a very grievous circumstance. Here is an ordinance through which we are taught to believe, and we are most ready to believe, a vast amount of good might be wrought. Yet what is the fact? The benefit conferred by preaching at the present day I believe to be utterly insignificant. It is so lifeless, so lukewarm, so apathetic,—it displays so little real, earnest, manful, resolute endeavour to achieve a result, or it exhibits so painfully the absence of qualifications for pulpit ministration, that, generally speaking, the sermon is a dark infliction and a dismal calamity. But what would be the case if no man ascended the pulpit not possessed of both undoubted power and undaunted determination to make an impression? What would be the case if, invariably, in the place of the feeble intellect there were the strong and mighty—in the place of involved argument and obscure diction, there were clear logic and perspicuous composition—in the place of a sleepy sing-song or a monotonous whine, there were the bold and energetic manner, the vigorous and yet attractive and graceful delivery? I say, what would be the case if this change were made? Should we have a congregation staring the one member at another, or at the windows, or at the ceiling? Should we have the thoughts directed to the counting-house, or the shop, or dwelling, or the evening entertainment fixed for the morrow, or the family gathering to-day? Nay, nay, this is so now—now, when there is the very strongest inclination to abstract one's attention from the mumbling that is going on in the pulpit, or, if the preacher be at all events audible, from the miserable bungle that he is exhibiting with so much self-complacency. I repeat, this may be so *now*, it would not be so *then*. It would not be so when the powerful orator exerted his mightiest energies, poured forth all his magnificent eloquence, strove with his utmost strength, called into requisition every art of which he should be the master, to win souls to Heaven. Oh, it may be so now—now, when the ordinance of preaching seems so little cared for that no encouraging hand seems ever to be held out to the possessor and exerter of eloquence, so that the brightest pulpit orator of this day—a man upon whose accents tens of thousands have tremblingly hung—a man who strives with an angel's

strength, and an angel's love, to advance the cause of Heaven—receives so little testimony from the rulers of the country to his peculiar powers, that actually the main avocation by which he gains his bread has been obtained through other qualifications. It *may* be so *now*, but it could *not* be so *then*. Then there would be produced on the delivery of every sermon, at all events, something of the effect invariably created by the gifted minister of whom I have been speaking. Then good, like unto that which he has done, would be worked on every Sunday, in every church, and in the arousing consciences that otherwise would have lain dormant, in the casting, so to speak, new light into hearts where nought had been for many a long year but darkness—darkness to be felt—in the sounding the alarm, and the awakening to danger, many and many an one who, in the absence of so vigorous a call, would have slept on till the miserably frail bark, having passed from the narrow stream of life, should have entered on the broad ocean of eternity;—in the effecting this great and glorious result would be manifested the incalculable benefit of that reform which is now so earnestly and emphatically required.

But there is another qualification we have to notice, which ought to be, but is not, considered indispensable to a candidate for holy orders. No man can become a soldier or a sailor who has lost an arm; no man should take upon himself the office of a clergyman, involving reading and preaching, who has no voice. An incapability to make himself heard beyond a few yards should really be considered a disqualification for holy orders. It might be very sad; the candidate might be in every other respect admirably fitted for the calling to which he should aspire; but still it would be so much *more* sad to inflict upon a congregation the evil of being ministered unto by a clergyman whose physical weakness would render his performance every Sunday little more than dumb show to the greater portion of his auditory, that I believe an objection raised on such a score would be perfectly legitimate, nay, undeniably laudable. You may go into many a large church at this time, and you may see a figure in a pulpit at a long distance, and, listening attentively, you may fancy you catch a murmuring, you are not quite sure, but it may be so. However, as you suppose something must be going on, you presume that the faint sound you hear is the sermon, which the figure in the distance is delivering. You look around you. The portion of the congregation in pews in your immediate vicinity seem sleepy, a fearful number of "the poorer brethren" *are* asleep. And why not? The sleep will do them more good than the straining to hear a sermon which can *not* be heard. And this goes on Sunday after Sunday. People grumble; but to no purpose. My Lord So-and-So has nominated this reverend gentleman to this living, and in this living will the reverend gentleman remain for the rest of his existence; people may hear or may not hear; in regard to his staying or receiving his tithes, it will make no manner of difference. Now, I say that this ought not to be; that if, unfortunately, a man's lungs be so weak that the sound he emits is only audible at the very shortest distance, so that there is no church or chapel of the small dimensions that would suit his voice, that, in such case, the candidate for holy orders should not be admitted. And, moreover, every candidate received should, in reference to this point, be expressly informed, that when he should be hereafter appointed to minister in a church, should there be complaint on the part of any reasonable number of his congregation of his not being duly audible, and should such fact, after careful inquiry

and examination, be proved to impartial judges, that, in this event, whatever might be his other qualifications, or by whatsoever tenure in other respects he might hold his living, that he could *not* be suffered to remain in such living, for the very plain and simple, and, to the suffering portion of his congregation, most satisfactory reason, that he would not have the physical capability of performing properly its most important duties.

So that, briefly to recapitulate, we require four things in a candidate for holy orders. We want, in the first place, an earnest and hearty desire for the profession he seeks to adopt, a pure and profound love of the duties it is known to involve. We want, secondly, intellectual power to grasp vigorously and retain tenaciously all the deep mysteries of religion, all broad truths and subtle niceties, to deal with them without effort, and to exhibit and establish truth by arguments drawn from every source. We want, thirdly, the possession of more or less oratorical ability (and with the ability, the desire) of stating and proving propositions in such manner that the attentive cannot but be arrested and the mind convinced; and of so appealing to the feelings, that the heart will be touched and softened and overcome. We want, fourthly, the possession of a voice of sufficient compass to fill a church or chapel of ordinary dimensions. We think, that in the absence of any one of these four qualifications, the profession of the Church ought not to be chosen. There are plenty of men possessing them; the rendering them indispensable would by no means cause a scarcity of clergymen. The only result would be, that many able and gifted men who now keep aloof from the profession would be induced to enter it, and they would take the places hitherto in a sense so unworthily occupied. We entertain no hostility towards the clergy. We are anxious to give them our earnest support in every matter in which they may properly be supported; but we do require to see—we do hope to see—ay, and we will do all that we possibly can do to bring about—a great and important reform in the points upon which we have been remarking.

And now one word in regard to the emoluments of the Church. We do not consider them excessive at the present time. We do not consider it fair or just that you should pay a man who, from the nature of his office, is supposed to do you a greater benefit than could any other functionary, a smaller amount than you would regard as a recompense for the advantage conferred on you by such latter personage. Many men who entirely assent to the remunerating a judge with five thousand a year, think it monstrous that a bishop should receive the same amount; and they mutter something about the Apostles having been poor men, and possessed of little worldly goods. It is a most unfair argument. They *were* poor men, but their being poor was not indicative of their piety or virtue, even as, had they been rich, riches could not on that account be regarded as indissolubly connected with religion and uprightness. I do not see any other light in which we can properly view the matter of recompense to a clergyman than this. In ordinary concerns I pay in proportion to my receipt. I give unto my labourer according to the worth of his services, and the clever and the skilful in consequence receives much more than the slow and inexperienced. I pay unto this man and that man in proportion as I am advantaged by their toil. And why not apply the same rule in the remunerating clergymen? A minister who does his duty deserves at my hands a lofty recompense; than the office of a clergyman there is no higher—no higher, because none capable of conferring greater—nay, none which may bestow so great advantage upon the mass

of mankind. And if this be so, is it not a most mean and paltry proposition to pay the Church in a measure that would be deemed most scant and niggard if dealt to any other profession? Let us, indeed, require much of our clergymen—much more than we get at present; but do not let it be said that so lightly do we hold religion, that they who are in it our assistants and our guides, who aid us in health, who comfort us in sickness, who cheer us in death, and attend us at the tomb—do not allow it to be said that we are content to let these men live in comparative poverty and privation, upon the insulting pretext that their souls should be so wrapt in the contemplation of Heaven that their bodies should be disregardful of all earthly comfort and enjoyment.

But in connexion with the emoluments of the Church there is a point (I am sorry it comes last for observation) upon which I must, in conclusion, say a few words. I would speak of the salaries commonly paid to curates. It is a sore point, often remarked on before, and therefore I shall not dwell upon it, but I cannot entirely pass it over. We all know that it is a very common thing for a minister of a parish—in the country the case is often frightfully glaring—to pay to a curate, who performs nearly the whole of the duty, something less than would be paid to a West-end butler. Since such a great outcry was made in this matter, curates' berths may have looked up a little; but there is still immense reason to complain. One really could hardly have conceived it possible that a clergyman—a man supposed to be just, liberal, and kind-hearted, disposed to give everybody their due, to act honestly and honourably with all men, to do unto others as he would they should do unto him; it had been scarcely possible, I say, to conceive that a man, concerning whom one would have been bound to hold such expectations, could have been guilty of the monstrous, abominable, and scandalous injustice exhibited by so many clergymen in their treatment of their curates. Let the Church see well to this cause of complaint. Oh! she has no need to give handles to her enemies, for they are many and mighty. Yet, if she display herself as she should before the world; if she show every disposition to reform those things in her which are amiss; if she put herself forward, in no boasting attitude, in no haughty fashion, frowning down upon the multitude, treating them with scorn, and exciting their anger and reproach, but as a guardian and preserver, as an enemy to the persecutor and protector to the oppressed, as a lover of peace and a banisher of strife, as an untiring attendant for good through life and at death—oh! in such case, there is nothing to fear for the Church of England. They who are resolute against all the reform which she needs, who scowl at those who love her quite as much, and who would support her quite as ardently, but who will NOT shut their eyes to things wherein she is open to blame, even as a father will not pass over in silence the faults of his children—these men may talk and may preach of danger, but there is no cause for apprehension. There is a call for exertion, a call for the putting aside every hindrance to effort, a call for the cleansing from soil and from stain. There is no cry for destruction, no whisper of injury. She is in the hearts of the people still—not as warmly as she was, but that has been her own fault—but the people have NOT deserted her; and if she do not desert them, if she rouse and bestir herself as becomes her in these dark and perilous times, she will be held safe and secure from all her adversaries, her will being submitted to, her commands obeyed, her desires carried out, and she will sit in triumph complete and lasting.

WORDSWORTH'S "PRELUDE."*

A WORK like this, published so soon after the demise of its author, cannot be approached but with feelings of reverence, somewhat akin to what we should experience on contemplating the simple marble slab and brief inscription which now mark the spot where repose the mortal remains of the poet. His mind he long ago freely gave to the world; and this last posthumous work may fairly be looked upon as its author's best and most appropriate legacy—an auto-biography written in the language most familiar to him; and the growth of a mind whose development must be a history, treasured alike by poet and by philosopher.

William Wordsworth has been justly designated as the greatest of the metaphysical poets. Poetry was with him the early and almost the sole business of life. His attempt to substitute the humblest subjects and most simple language, for the fine fabric of poetic diction which had been in use for generations of the tuneful tribe, was at first but sparingly appreciated, and, in many instances, assailed with ridicule. It indicated, however, at once power and originality, for none but one strong in the subject-matter, and having faith in its simple enunciation, could have ventured on such an experiment. An exhaustless vein of pure and exalted description and meditation ensured success. Wordsworth's greatest poem, "The Excursion," contained passages of sentiment, description, and pure eloquence, not excelled by any living poet, while its spirit of enlightened humanity and Christian benevolence—extending over all ranks of sentient and animated being—imparted to that noble poem a peculiarly sacred and elevated character. It is now admitted, by all qualified to give an opinion, that the influence of Wordsworth on the poetry of his age has been as beneficial as extensive. "He has turned the public taste from pompous inanity to the study of man and nature; he has banished the false and exaggerated style of character and emotion, which even the genius of Byron stooped to imitate; and he has enlisted the sensibilities and sympathies of his intellectual brethren in favour of the most expansive and kindly philanthropy." The pleasures and graces of his muse, always simple and pure, are lastingly enshrined in a work of which Coleridge once said—

> An Orphic tale indeed—
> A tale divine of high and passionate thoughts,
> To their own music chanted.

Commenced half a century ago, and reserved by its author for posthumous publication, it truly records the progress of the author's mind—the self-consciousness of power, and of a poet's mission—and the first attempts at interpreting nature, from his own native impulses:—

> Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
> Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
> Much favoured in my birthplace, and no less
> In that beloved Vale to which ere long
> We were transplanted—there were we let loose
> For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
> Ten birthdays, when among the mountain slopes
> Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
> The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
> With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
> To range the open heights where woodcocks run
> Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,

* The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Auto-biographical Poem. By William Wordsworth. Edward Moxon.

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation;—moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befel
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

A finely-told incident of poetic boyhood reveals the inner man more than pages of prose could do:—

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fix my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own,
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

We need not say what more the "Prelude" contains: indoor and outdoor recreations—school-time—college—travel—the metropolis—the topics of the day; for this history of the growth of a poet's mind will have been before this in the hands of all who are loyal in literature and in poetry.

THE HUGUENOT'S DAUGHTER.

Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge.

I.

The green hills and sweet valleys of "la belle France" no more resounded with the echoing blasts of war. The earth smiled again, as if at its glad release from the fiends of strife. The sanguinary leader of the Catholic bands, exhausted by the merciless massacre of thousands of the hated name of Huguenot, ceased from shedding innocent blood—the blood of kinsmen and countrymen—which cried for Heaven's vengeance from the ground. With returning peace, rejoicing to efface the remembrance of those dreadful events which had so sinfully blotted the beauteous face of their land, the young men and maidens of the hamlets, seeming to vie with the gladness of nature around them, devoted the hours to love and amusement.

But it was in a little village overshadowed by high rocks, forming a kind of natural barrier to its native loveliness, that some of the happiest of these hours were passed. For it was a vintage feast, in the lovely month of August, and the chaste lustre of the harvest-moon gave to the flowers and foliage a softer grace and purer beauty. There may be finer, but never was seen a more genuine rural *fête*. Group after group of the happy vintagers assemble under the shelter of the green trees to enjoy the cool of the evening; the light forms of the young village maidens flitting to and fro in the bright moonlight, seeming like the festival of some fairy court. There is ample room for all. What so pretty as meadows and banks for seats? What merriment was there! What a vintage! The happy dancers keeping time to the joyous thrill of a world of music. But who now appears so potent a magician as to add to the rapture of the scene? Yet such is the effect of that graceful form seen advancing towards the group. She is hailed with greetings from all—with raptured sounds of applause. Joy! joy! it is she—the queen of all hearts. It is Mariette!

What avails it to descant on beauty and perfection, when every voice proclaimed her loveliest of the lovely. She, too, joined the merry maze, and many a maiden's heart beat with suppressed chagrin as the eyes of all were bent in admiration on the gliding, graceful form of the half proud, half innocently conscious beauty, as, aware of their regards, she trips it with added grace. What wonder, then, that, with so much adoration, so much homage, if sweet Mariette was becoming something of a coquette—an innocent, rural one, to be sure, but still a coquette. Many were the admonitions of the old dames and dowager queens of the village; but a kiss and a hearty laugh were the peace-offering of the heedless little beauty. Still, there was a depth of feeling beneath these flashes, as a skilful physiognomist might have learnt from the soft lustre of her dark eye. Even this festive morning a slight shade of sadness might be detected on her fair brow, betraying to a nice observer some uneasiness of the secret heart. But it was for an instant only, that earnest, melancholy glance, and flies like soft April drops before the fresh outbreaking sun. Victor is not yet there—he, the handsomest, the best; and what to her was the presence of all others!

How eagerly do the admiring youths press forward to entreat the happy privilege of her hand for the dance. Who will be the envied conqueror to claim the kiss of victory? for that is the reward promised to him who can weary his fair partner in the dance. But they have a poor chance with the fairy-footed Mariette.

A young man of gay and handsome, but bold and haughty bearing takes her hand. She is piqued at his brusque and boastful air, and remains cold and silent. On they whirl with the buoyant crowd, but she is determined not to be conquered; and, irritated and confused more than actually wearied, François is compelled to surrender; he is defeated. Another begs her hand. She turns; it is the graceful bearing, the winning tone of Victor. His earnest eyes are fixed entreatingly upon her. Could she refuse? Ah, no! and she was again led off—this time, how willingly! "Do they not seem made for each other?" whispered some; "both so animated, so graceful." But she is sooner wearied than before. Her colour changes; she gives it up, and her blushing cheek is turned towards Victor. He claims the promised kiss.

Jealousy rankles in the bosom of the defeated lover. Dark thoughts, "cruel as the grave," are in his heart at sight of that kiss, so willingly received, so warmly bestowed. Light and love, death and darkness—fearful contrast! Could François, the rich, the powerful, admired and courted, brook indifference? disdain the preference, too, given to a poor peasant? From that moment they were rivals.

II.

Mariette was the daughter of a Huguenot. The darling of her widowed mother, for well did Mariette, with her gentle care, repay the fond affection of her beloved parent.

And Victor, the brave, the good, worthy even of Mariette's love, who was he? Alas! he was, like themselves, poor; yet, tried ability and noble daring seem, in a young soldier, happy prognostics of success. Though loving Mariette devotedly, his generous heart would not brook the idea of asking her to share his humble lot. She, the gifted, the beautiful—to cast one shadow on her joyous youth. It was impossible! Yet, oh! how often beat his strong heart with emotion, while, least of all around her, *his* lips dared to avow that which his too eloquent silence, proceeding from the very intensity and generosity of his affection, so plainly betrayed to the eye of a rival; yet poor Mariette feared it denoted that he loved her not. And now, when upon the eve of leaving her, what contending feelings agitated his bosom! Should another, nobler born, richer, in his absence seek to win her love; she was free; perhaps would give power and splendour the preference. Then again, he could not—would not believe she would forget him so soon, ere he once returned. Then, would not he, too, be richer?—could not he, too, honourably seek her as his bride? Hope smiled in the distance: that one beam illumined his path, enabling him to bear like a hero, as he could, affections' "fond and last adieu." Yes, it was said; and Victor gladdened the eyes of old and young no more. There was sorrow for poor Mariette; but great joy filled the exulting heart of François.

His rival, the hated Victor, was absent now. He would take all pains

so to improve that absence, as to make his return still more bitter to him than the parting hour.

With a smooth-gliding, serpentine guile, and studied wariness, hidden only to make it the more dangerous, under an apparently most ingenuous exterior, he gradually won the confidence of the most scrupulous; and that once obtained, he hesitated not, where his own interest was concerned, to betray the trust reposed. Thus, his manners became most finely modulated to chime in with Mariette's sorrowing mood. He affected to participate in it, with an inimitable air of sympathy. She had never before felt so cordially inclined towards him. He was kind—the perfection of unobtrusive and friendly attention—his all-sufficient recompense, the hope of mitigating *her* chagrin.

Excursions proposed, entertainments devised, all were his doing, and for her. But by degrees the mask was worn less cautiously, as he beheld with satisfaction the effects of his machinations. Mariette's innocent nature believed the beguiler to be what he appeared—kind and generous. He was so happy to behold her bright smiles and animated spirits, when participating in one of the little amusements he had prepared for her; and the remembrance of the imagined wrong she had done him, by her hitherto unfavourable opinion, added to this feeling. He had already won her esteem, her gratitude. Would not her affection soon follow? No; there he was mistaken. He spoke of love; but she was surprised, indignant, and told him that she "never, never," repeating the word emphatically, "would be his." A second time defeated, scorned. Would he endure it? Then he remembered his rival; and henceforth he swore that his only thought should be revenge. If she persisted in refusing him, let the penalty fall upon her own head.

III.

In the apartment of an humble cottage, a fair girl sat watching the slumbers of her sick parent. She appeared solitary and sad, for, as she rested her head upon her hand, the tears were stealing through those slender fingers. All around told of poverty. Yet the flowers, tended with so much care, are blooming and fragrant still, while she, the sweetest of them all, the beautiful Mariette, is neglected and lonely. What a contrast! She who was so caressed and beloved by all, for whom the youths of the village would gladly once have risked their lives, all now flee from her, as though there were a pestilence in the atmosphere of her bright and youthful beauty. Slander had spread abroad: how quickly, on the wings of envy and malice!

In those days great was the superstitious terror of the Evil One, strange as it may now sound; and she, the pure, the virtuous, was malignantly stigmatised as having entered into a compact with the powers of darkness. There was, in truth, a witchery in her charms, of which all had felt the power; and to crown the withering malice, even this was said to be the effect of some evil compact. Her flowers, her garden, with the innocent means of her industry, throve better than those of her neighbours; and this was additional proof of her intimate acquaintance with the black art. The poor Huguenot's daughter was despised and persecuted.

Victor, too; was it so? Had he, perhaps, forgotten her. It was im-

possible, she thought; and her last, only hope, she cannot, she will not relinquish, that his heart is still faithful, fond as her own.

Musing one day in this mood, she unconsciously pronounced his name, when her mother, having suddenly awakened, with the querulous irritation of infirmity, exclaimed,

"Why, Mariette, do you distress your poor sick parent, thinking still of that ungrateful Victor? Child, do not give way to such folly; he has long since, no doubt, forgotten you. All have done so now, except, indeed, François, who is kind and good" (here poor Mariette shuddered). "It is not right for you to scorn him as you do; he loves you, and would be our support and protection—a protection, indeed! for he is rich and powerful. Promise me to be his."

"Oh! dear mother, spare me, anything but that will I do for you. I know we are poor, but I will work day and night for you if need be. Do not fear. I am young and strong. There is hope of better things for us. Remember, dear mother, our Saviour's declaration, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation;' yet He will never leave or forsake those who trust in Him. That alone is the hope that 'maketh not ashamed.'"

The complaints of her parent, the persecution, for such was to her the increasing endeavours of François to gain her love—labour, care, all this had poor Mariette to endure; but her pious faith and hope strengthened her to bear all the "pelting of the pitiless storm."

With mingled hope and fear, that filling of the heart with the varied softening recollections which are awakened in the breast of one returning to the land associated with the happy memories of home and love, Victor again returns after the absence of years to his native village. His hopes of advancement are realised. He has obtained that preferment and success his merit had deserved. He is respected and honoured by all: yet sadness predominates in the conflicting feelings which overpower his heart. Perhaps it is superstitious weakness, but the village, he thinks, bears a neglected and melancholy appearance. Even the trees and shrubs seemed no longer to wear the brightness of their former hues in his eyes. He is approaching nearer and nearer. Each winding of the road presents some well-remembered object; but what means that uproar and tumult which sounds harshly and discordantly upon his ears? Cries of terror and shrieks for help fill his heart with dismay. Suddenly the cause is explained. On approaching nearer, he sees the flames illumining the skies in a canopy of fire, while the cries of "Burn them! burn them! Turn them out! Send the bewitched Huguenots from among us and we shall prosper!" tell him that it is the fearful work of the deluded populace.

Amid that cluster of cottages is the dwelling of his Mariette; nearer, he distinguishes that theirs is the seat of the flames. Gracious Heavens! what could it mean? He rushes forward, notwithstanding the cautions of the bystanders, wildly through the crowd, regardless of the scorching fire, the confusing clouds of smoke. He ascends the tottering staircase in desperation to seek and save Mariette: but oh! the dreadful thought that he was too late smote upon his heart, as, clasping her pale mute form in his arms, he descends and reaches the earth in safety.

"Stay," he cries, "miscreants, wretches, and stop your work of blood!"

The noble bearing of the young soldier, his commanding aspect and address, arrested for a moment even the savage ferocity of fanatical hate, and the crowd shrank back with the same cowardice which had first dictated the attack. But he heeds them not. He is gazing with gratitude and delight, for now heavenly love is springing in his heart at the returning consciousness of his Mariette. Oh! see, she greets him with a smile of love, and such a smile—when suddenly bursting in haste through the people, his rival appears, the despoiler of his love's peace, François.

"Victor again!" exclaimed he, "my evil genius; it is too much. What! you have saved her, too, and that should have been my office; but I have saved a life dear to her as her own, her mother's, and for that at least I claim her gratitude," he added, with bitterness.

"François, you are unjust," exclaimed the generous Victor; "in what have I wronged you? Is it my fault that we both love her! But she is free. I will be to her only what she wishes—her friend, her brother—can I say more?"

"Once for all, then,—Mariette, whom do you love?" asked François, overcome by his generosity; "that must decide our fate."

"Victor only, Victor ever!" murmured Mariette, as her lover fondly embraced her.

"Wherefore, then, mar our felicity, François?" said Victor; "will you not be our friend?"

"Yes! generous, noble Victor, I will be that friend; as firm, I trust, and faithful a friend as I have been cruel and persecuting an enemy. Mariette and the power of goodness has triumphed. I am no longer a demon. I cannot resist your noble nature which has softened my relentless one. But oh!" he exclaimed, with the remorse which a generous forgiveness rarely fails to awaken in one who feels himself unworthy of it, "could you forgive me did you know the injury I have done, the misery I have caused you both. Men," he cried, "you whom I have deceived and fed in your delusions, it is fit that I should have the humiliation of confessing my base conduct before you. It is I who have raised the vile calumny against that pure and spotless creature—I who fomented hate and discord. It is false, false as the accusation, as the evil heart which propagated it. I alone am miserably guilty."

Hot and bitter tears—tears of penitence and shame, wrung from the proud François, attested the truth of that strange confession, as on bended knees he entreated the forgiveness of both. It was already granted by the happy lovers. Who shall describe their joy, the rapture, which love such as theirs bestows? Heaven smiled upon it.

François was true to his word. His works gave evidence meet for repentance; and soon the whole village, inspired by the happy revolution in his breast, or in gratitude for their deeds of love and benevolence, learned to bless the names of Mariette and Victor.

END OF VOL. XVIII.

WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.